

WHY WE HATE: CHANGES IN AMERICAN  
PROPAGANDA POSTERS IN WORLD WAR I AND  
WORLD WAR II

By

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WHY WE HATE: CHANGES IN AMERICAN  
PROPAGANDA POSTERS IN WORLD WAR I AND  
WORLD WAR II

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Abstract:

Between World War I and World War II American culture changed and that change is reflected in the propaganda posters used in each war. The posters in each war contained different artistic styles, but had similar themes. The examination of thirty propaganda posters reveals the many different aspects that are seen in both wars. While discussing the main poster themes, the differing artistic styles become apparent, and the reasons for that change are discussed. Romanticism influenced how people viewed the world during the First World War, but due to the realities of the war, that view changed. World War II posters contained images that are more indicative of Realism and some of the image displayed the harsh realities of the war. The change in artistic styles reflects the change in culture. People were outraged at how the government presented the war as being an honorable heroic endeavor, because the reality of the war was far from anything told to the public.

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## INTRODUCTION

Propaganda elicits a negative response from most people. The term is often equated with “‘lies’, ‘deceit’, and ‘brainwashing’”. Although it was not invented by the Nazis, many of our modern conceptions about propaganda stem from the way Joseph Goebbels and the Nazis used it<sup>1</sup>. However, this thesis uses a more classical understanding of the word. In ancient Greece, persuasion was a form of rhetoric; and throughout history, governments continuously attempted to change public opinion<sup>2</sup>. Propaganda is neither good nor bad. It is used by governments and companies to help and to hurt. The negative or positive view of the word is subjective and depends on the implementation of the propaganda. The use of that word in this thesis intends to be objective and purely means a way of influencing people’s opinions.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the differences and similarities between the propaganda posters in World War I and World War II. Relative to the rest of topics of both wars, this subject has had a limited amount of discussion. The examinations of the posters in this work intends to help the J.M. Davis Arms and Historical Museum in Claremore, Oklahoma by giving them material to aid in educating their patrons who view its World War I poster exhibit.

The posters analyzed in this work come from a few different sources. The intention was to obtain all of the posters for it from the J.M. Davis Arms and Historical Museum, but its

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholas John Cull, David Holbrook Culbert, and David Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present* (Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2003), XV.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

collection is limited and does not contain a full representation of all the various types of posters used in World War I. It also does not have any posters from World War II. Therefore, a different source was needed, and the Library of Congress was also utilized. It has a large online database of propaganda posters printed for the Committee on Public Information, in World War I, and the Office of War Information, in World War II. The majority of the posters came from the Library of Congress online archive.

Each of the posters examined are representative of particular styles and themes that run throughout the posters in both wars. Many of the posters illustrate the multiple techniques used in the posters during each war. Some of the posters examined in this work are famous and easily identifiable, which was one of the main purposes in choosing them. As many famous works as possible were used in order to help the reader better understand the differences between the styles. The more someone encounters one of posters, the more they will be able to identify key elements in the artwork.

The examination of each poster focuses on the iconography that is at work in it. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, iconography is “imagery or symbolism in a work of art”<sup>3</sup>. Some of the images have an established iconography, but many of the interpretations are the author’s. For example, the use of Uncle Sam is common and purely patriotic, whereas bayonets are mostly reserved for World War I. In World War II they are rare and subsequently take on a more brutal aspect. There is no definitive compilation of patriotic iconography for either war, so deciphering the meanings of the posters largely rests on the viewer.

With the absence of a guide of iconography for the wars, deciphering the posters becomes subjective, and one has to guess about the meanings and intentions. The author seeks to interpret each poster and propaganda technique within the works. There are relatively few

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<sup>3</sup> *Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online*, s.v. “Iconography.” <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/iconography>



writings on the subject. Therefore, most of the observations and suggestions within this thesis are original ideas and considerations.

The author chose each poster presented in this thesis for a few main reasons. After looking through thousands of posters, each of the thirty figures are representative of various styles and themes that are either common to one war or both. Each poster contains characteristics that help the reader to grasp concepts and themes that are discussed.

This work discusses American culture during each war, and examines how the society influences the artistic styles of the posters. During World War I Romanticism and Victorianism are controlling the way people think and act. The term Romanticism refers to idealism and passion being the primary modes of eliciting emotions<sup>4</sup>. Between the wars society changes and as a result World War II is influenced by Realism, which is attempts to present the world to the viewer with authenticity and accuracy<sup>5</sup>.

Originally, the posters contained within this work hung in public areas, and anywhere the image could reach the most people. Now, they hang in museums or collect dust in archives. An extension of this thesis is going to be in an exhibit at the J.M. Davis Arms and Historical Museum, using sections of this work and transferring the ideas onto information cards that go along with the various posters exhibited there. This will help the patron to better understand what they are viewing. In order to accomplish this task, the information that is pertinent to this part of the exhibit is written in a way that is understandable to the public. The purpose is to increase public interest and knowledge on the subject of propaganda posters.

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<sup>4</sup> "What Is Romanticism?," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 19, no. 4 (January 1966):2-3, accessed January 28, 2016)

<sup>5</sup> Willis H. Truitt, "Realism," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 37, no. 2 (Winter 1978), 141-143, (accessed January 28, 2016)

## CHAPTER I

### WHO CREATED THE POSTERS

Both World Wars had government agencies that controlled almost every aspect of their propaganda poster campaigns. During World War I, administration of the posters mostly fell under the influence of one man and the team of people who worked around him. World War II was a little different, because the governmental agency that was in control of the war propaganda was not established until after the war started. In both wars, the government oversaw the entire process of the propaganda campaigns, from hiring the artists and telling them what to compose, to where and how the posters entered the public's everyday life.

#### **World War I**

World War I propaganda posters in the United States came in many varieties, and one overarching government entity oversaw their creation and distribution. In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson established the Committee on Public Information (CPI) with the primary objective of influencing American public opinion in favor of joining the war<sup>6</sup>. The CPI, with George Creel as its director, was responsible for most of the propaganda the government released during its two years of activity. Creel's committee used newspapers, magazines, radio, public

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<sup>6</sup> Nicholas John Cull, David Holbrook Culbert, and David Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present* (Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 99.

speakers, movies, and posters to reach the American audience<sup>7</sup>. Some campaigns were more successful than others, but ultimately the CPI served its purpose of influencing public opinion and generating support for the war. Creel had the job of selling the war to the American public, which was mostly neutral toward the conflict and did not want to get involved on a large scale<sup>8</sup>. Ultimately, the CPI succeeded in helping to change public opinion, and the United States joined the war against the Central Powers.

The CPI orchestrated and distributed the posters to many different groups, who then placed them in designated areas. Creel enlisted the help of the Society of Illustrators, and together they formed the Division of Pictorial Publicity, which worked closely with the Division of Advertising to create the poster's images and messages.<sup>9</sup> On 6 April 1917, the United States entered the First World War, and the distribution of posters came quickly thereafter. By April 14, the "Women's Suffrage Party, aided by battalions of Boy Scouts, plastered New York City with 20,000 recruitment posters."<sup>10</sup> Propaganda posters proved a quick and easy way to reach the public, and the messages that the posters conveyed were vital to the war effort. Poster messages varied depending on the campaign. The main messages revolved around recruitment, food conservation, buying war bonds, and the promotion of national unity.<sup>11</sup> These types of messages were displayed effectively on a poster in a way that was easy for the public to understand. Posters required an image that was simple to understand by a person who only looked at the image for a short time.

Propaganda poster campaigns were one of the cheapest ways for the government to affect public opinion. Posters were inexpensive to produce, partly due to the "American billposting

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> James Aulich, *War Posters: Weapons of Mass Communication*, (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 54.

<sup>10</sup> George C. Marshall Research Foundation and Anthony R. Crawford. *Posters of World War I and World War II in the George C. Marshall Research Foundation*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), 6.

<sup>11</sup> *War Posters*, 55.

agencies and artists [giving] of their space and talents freely.”<sup>12</sup> Poster designs and artwork were the artist’s way of contributing to the war effort. The American government did not have to pay the artist or the companies they worked for, which meant that the posters would be one of the cheaper propaganda methods to employ.

Even though the costs of the posters were low, most in the American government were not completely convinced that the posters worked. President Wilson was the primary supporter of George Creel and his commission because the two men worked together during Wilson’s campaign.<sup>13</sup> Creel proved himself competent with propaganda and persuading the public, because the wartime loan and bond drives generated a lot of money<sup>14</sup>. Once the United State Government saw the positive effects of the CPI campaigns, there was a decision to continue using all means of propaganda to advance the war effort.

Many governmental agencies used posters to help their cause, and by the end of the war, the variety of poster designs and their numbers were massive. The United States was only in the war for a year and a half, yet the CPI produced and dispensed millions of posters, with the Liberty Loan campaigns being some of the most numerous<sup>15</sup>.

The third liberty loan in April 1918 saw 9 million posters produced and were distributed as far away as Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines and the US army camps in France. For the fourth liberty loan in September 1918, 10 million posters were printed, of which 50,000 were twenty-four-sheet (that is, four sheets high by six sheets wide).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>13</sup> *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 99.

<sup>14</sup> James J. Kimble, *Mobilizing the Home Front: War Bonds and Domestic Propaganda*, (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2006), 16.

<sup>15</sup> Anne Classen Knutson, “Breasts, Brawn and Selling a War: American World War I Propaganda Posters, 1917-1918” (PhD Diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1997), 28.  
<http://argo.library.okstate.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/argo.library.okstate.edu/docview/304369270?accountid=4117> (accessed January 19, 2014).

<sup>16</sup> *War Posters*, 55.

The Liberty Loans helped to fund the war. Over the course of the war there were four Liberty Loan drives, which occurred in April 1917, October 1917, April 1918, and September 1918<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, a massive printing of posters, as well as a large push on other themes of propaganda, was necessary. Artists working on the various poster campaigns created many different designs. By the end of the war, artists completed over 700 designs that promoted recruitment, food production and rationing, the Red Cross, Liberty Loans, American Ambulances, and other war-related issues.<sup>18</sup> Some of the drives by the different war agencies and companies saw a massive use of millions of posters scattered around the United States and its territories.

The posters in the First World War used certain symbols in order to make the viewer feel a specific way. Artists needed to sell the war in their posters, so they relied on images that were compelling. The posters “sought to exploit people’s conscious or subconscious vulnerabilities to appeals to basic emotions of self-preservation, tribal patriotic pride, and traditional morality.”<sup>19</sup> Each of the interpreted areas played an important role in shaping public opinion. Everyone wanted to save himself or herself from being harmed by a threat, so the war posters told people that they would save themselves through buying liberty bonds or donating to the Red Cross. There were similar messages using Uncle Sam or Columbia. The demise of the American way of existence became a primary subject matter for the war posters, because it played on the public’s underlying instincts of protecting America and its culture.

## **World War II**

During the Second World War, propaganda posters in the United States were commonly seen on a walk or commute to work, trip to the store, in a newspaper or magazine, and any other time one went around town. Posters were not the only form of propaganda used by the U.S.

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<sup>17</sup> Sung Won Kang and Hugh Rockoff, “Capitalizing Patriotism: The Liberty Loans of World War I,” *Financial History Review* 22 (April 2015), 56-57, (accessed October 20, 2012).

<sup>18</sup> *War Posters*, 54.

<sup>19</sup> *Posters of World War I and World War II*, 6.

government. They also employed Hollywood, radio programs and advertisements, cartoons, music, and other forms of media<sup>20</sup>. However, posters were more common than the other methods of spreading propaganda<sup>21</sup>. They could be made in mass quantities and spread around a large area, whereas a movie could only be seen by those going to the theater. Another benefit was that a person's exposure to posters could be longer than a radio program. Someone could only hear a radio campaign during the purchased time slots, but a poster would be on a wall until either the elements or people took it down, or a new poster was pasted over it.

During World War II, the Office of War Information (OWI) controlled the release of all the American propaganda from the time of its formation to the end of the war. Franklin D. Roosevelt created the agency with an Executive Order 9182 on 13 June 1942 with the goal of simplifying the way information about the war reached the public<sup>22</sup>. In order to gain more support from the civilian populace, there needed to be one central agency that could control the information that would reach them. Roosevelt limited the powers of the OWI by not allowing them to have control over censorship. If there was one agency that controlled it all, Roosevelt's enemies could compare it to Joseph Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda<sup>23</sup>. A mistake like that would have been an embarrassing and a bad political move. Therefore, Roosevelt separated the tasks involved in creating propaganda to various agencies. The OWI worked with the Office of Censorship on deciding what the public should know, and once the two agencies decided, the OWI would send the information to the News Bureau, which "released information and news about the war effort...".<sup>24</sup> The system of getting propaganda out to the masses was well

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<sup>20</sup> David H Culbert, eds., *Information Control and Propaganda: Records of the Office of War Information, Part I: The Director's Central Files 1942-1945* (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, Inc., 1986), V-XI.

<sup>21</sup> Terrence H. Witkowski, "World War II Poster Campaigns: Preaching Frugality to American Consumers," *Journal of Advertising* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2003):69, (accessed October 21, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> David H. Culbert, eds., *Information Control and Propaganda: Records of the Office of War Information Part II: Office of Policy Coordination* (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America Inc., 1986), V.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 284.

controlled initially, but it would dissolve toward the end of the war. In September 1945, the OWI was terminated<sup>25</sup> due to an increasing amount of controversy with their handling of issues and people, like Joseph Stalin<sup>26</sup>. After the war, America entered a war with communism. Senator Joseph McCarthy and his cohort saw the OWI as being too soft on communism and Stalin, so it dissolved while trying to fight against McCarthy's allegations<sup>27</sup>.

Subjects of the OWI posters included: buying war bonds<sup>28</sup>; careless talk; recruiting; increasing production; conservation; and other ways one could support the war effort<sup>29</sup>. The different themes accompanied the various campaigns that the war agencies launched. If the promotions were to be successful, then posters needed to remind people of the campaigns on a daily basis.

Different drives often had their own style, but some of the more popular artist would add their own flare to the art on the poster itself, while still maintaining the message. Artists, such as "Stevan Dohanes, Norman Rockwell, Albert Dorne, McLelland Barclay, Jean Carlu, and J.W. Schlaikjer" would take part in government contests that decided which design to use<sup>30</sup>. Artists contributed to the war effort in ways that best suited their expertise. The government worked with many artists to make all of the war posters the OWI and other governmental agencies used. Most of the people who worked on the design of the posters received no compensation other than to see their work reproduced in large quantities. In April 1941, the Museum of Modern Art even worked with the government to increase the pool of designs from which OWI and other agencies could choose. They orchestrated a competition with the guidelines of making the designs

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<sup>25</sup> *Information Control and Propaganda Part I*, XIII.

<sup>26</sup> *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 284.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> During World War II, there were eight bond drives, where the Series E bonds were available for purchase only by individuals. The various issuances took place from 1939 to 1946.

<sup>29</sup> *War Posters*, 169-170.

<sup>30</sup> *Posters of World War I and World War II*, 12.

contemporary, and the winners would have their work displayed in an exhibit<sup>31</sup>. This competition enticed more artists to become involved in the war effort of making propaganda posters. More appealing images, it was believed, would likely catch the attention of a person walking by, and the more they read the message, the better the chance the OWI had of their campaigns working.

Placing the poster out in the public did not happen randomly. The OWI developed a strategy on where and how to place them. It wrote a handbook about the entire process and distributed it to the people who were in charge of placing the posters around the section of the town or city in which they lived<sup>32</sup>. The distribution process occurred at both a national and local level. Various government buildings received posters and displayed them on their own. However, this did not cover a wide enough spectrum of places that the average person would visit throughout the day<sup>33</sup>. Therefore, it became necessary to get citizens involved in placing the posters in locations they frequently visited.

Each community had a Defense Council, and within the Council a poster committee handled the poster distribution<sup>34</sup>. Members of the committee scouted around for the best spots to place the posters. While looking for a location, the OWI handbook stated to be mindful of a few aspects like: the number of people that would see the posters in the place being considered; if the place already had government posters; whether the area was practical for posting; getting the owner's permission; and the size of the poster that could be displayed<sup>35</sup>. The placement of the posters was a concern for the OWI because the public needed to see the posters and their messages. Visibility was the most important consideration in placing the posters, so the OWI, members of the committee, and other groups that helped to distribute the posters focused on high

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<sup>31</sup> William L Bird and Harry R. Rubenstein, *Design for Victory: World War II Posters on the American Home Front*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 23.

<sup>32</sup> United States. *Poster Handbook: A Plan for Displaying Official War Posters*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1943), I.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 3.



traffic areas. Almost every government building from museums, to post offices and schools, railroad stations, restaurants, stores, and occasionally the sides of buildings would have a propaganda poster hanging for anyone passing by to see<sup>36</sup>. The OWI wanted a total saturation of governmental messages aimed at the average citizen. The messages contained on the posters supposed that every citizen needed to be a better contributing member of wartime society.

Posters had certain criteria to meet. The artist who designed the poster had to be aware of the main points that government officials wanted to be present in every poster. All needed to appeal to human emotions and not be abstract<sup>37</sup>. Appealing to emotions made the viewer feel something about the image. If the image evoked a response then there was a chance that the viewer would support or be mindful of the message. The use of photographic detail stemmed from the government's concern over the public not understanding an abstract image and how it related to the message<sup>38</sup>. Therefore, using detail allowed everyone to understand the image.

The Creel Committee, during World War I, and the OWI, in World War II, oversaw the creation of most of the propaganda posters, from the subject matter of the posters to the distribution. Wilson hired Creel to take over the CPI before America entered the war, because the president knew changing the public's opinion on the war was an important task. World War II propaganda had a very different beginning. Partly as result of World War I, the OWI started after the war began. Both governmental agencies were very important to the war effort and influenced public opinion on the home front. Both agencies controlled most of the propaganda posters that the government released, although in World War II posters were just a part of a much larger and combined effort.

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<sup>36</sup> *Design for Victory*, 1-3.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*.

## CHAPTER II

### AN EXAMINATION OF THE POSTERS

The propaganda posters of both world wars mostly adhered to a few core guidelines that were intended to help sell the war; however, there were some differences in poster styles and themes. Some of the main overarching techniques used in posters in both wars are the use of symbolism, countermeans, and slogans. Countermeans refers the use of any other propaganda device in reverse, in order to “vilify, degrade the enemy and to combat sabotage, noncooperation, and apathy”<sup>39</sup>. Those were not the only poster techniques, and each war evoked other topics that were not unique to it. The difference in poster styles for each war was due to the point in time the wars took place. The styles of posters changed with the culture and advances in technology. World War I posters employed many elements of Romanticism, while World War II used Realism.

#### **World War I and the Underlying Aspects of All the Posters**

Symbolism was one of the most important aspects of the posters. The average person knew their country’s symbols, so seeing an image of the flag could spur support for the war within the viewer. American artists often used patriotic symbols, such as the flag, eagle,

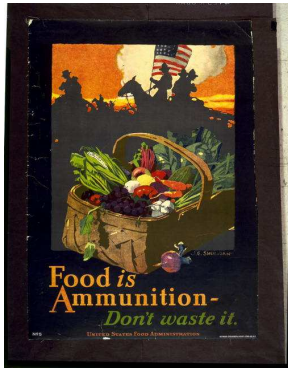
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<sup>39</sup> George C. Marshall Research Foundation and Anthony R. Crawford. *Posters of World War I and World War II in the George C. Marshall Research Foundation*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), 8.

Columbia, Uncle Sam, and many other well-known icons. *Figures 1, 4, and 5* are examples of the use of one or many American patriotic and international icons.

The image of the flag was one of the more popular icons.

For example, in *Figure 1* an American flag runs through the entire

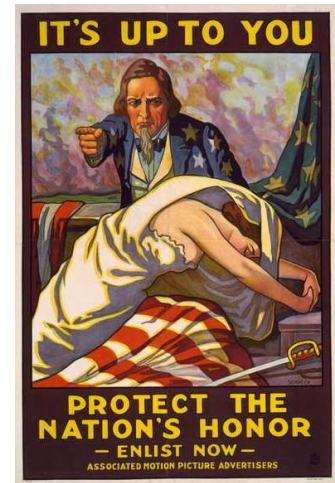


**Figure 2, *Food is Ammunition- Don't Waste it***

poster, starting in the middle right and curling its way onto Columbia's lap.

An image of the flag is also present in *Figure 3*, in which it is a part of the background, and *Figure 2*, utilizes the

silhouette of Cavalry troops holding an American flag, that is in color.



**Figure 1, *It's Up to You-- Protect the Nation's Honor***

Uncle Sam and Columbia were another main source of patriotic iconography. *Figure 1* is



**Figure 3, *On the Job for Victory***

one of the best examples of a poster with purely patriotic imagery. It depicts Uncle Sam pointing at the viewer over the body of Columbia, whose dress and body position suggest lamentation or sexual assault.

The artist's goal of images depicting women who were raped or harmed conjure feelings of anger and fear. As a result, the Creel Committee hoped the viewer would do everything they could to help America win the war.



**Figure 4, *The Navy is Calling- Enlist Now***

*Figure 4* is a Navy enlistment poster and is almost one large patriotic icon. The poster portrays a massive bald eagle with an American flag in the shape of a crest on the bird's chest, and Navy men at the eagle's feet.

This poster is an explosion of patriotism. The bald eagle is the national symbol of America, as well as a large predatory animal that symbolizes strength and speed. Both of those attributes are valued in warfare. The use of the eagle on an enlistment poster could do two important things, inspire the potential enlistee and make their friends and family proud of recruit's choice.

Not all of the major symbols used in the posters were patriotic. *Figure 5* is an example of an international symbol found in many poster campaigns during WWI. Its focus is the Red Cross War Fund. During the war, the Red Cross played an important role in taking care of wounded soldiers and civilians<sup>40</sup>. This, of course, cost money, because of the transportation and expense of the doctors, nurses, medical supplies, and food. Consequently, the



**Figure 5, *Second Red Cross War Fund***

Red Cross needed to set up war funds to help pay the bills. *Figure 5*, also presents an image of a soldier carrying another on his back on a battlefield. There is barbed wire at the main soldier's feet. The bodies of the two men make the shape of a cross, which is red from the waist up but grey from the waist down. The color contrast helps in making the red more noticeable. There is a Red Cross badge on the soldier who is standing, which would indicate that his job is to retrieve wounded soldiers from the battlefield. This poster employs both symbolism and Realism. The Realism from the poster comes through the way the men and battlefield are illustrated. Neither man looks happy or silly. The wounded man appears to be unconscious and the soldier who is carrying him looks forlorn. Bringing the Realism of the war to the viewer back home would help people understand that the war is horrible and money is needed to save the lives of the wounded.

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<sup>40</sup> Henriette Donner, "Under the Cross--Why V.A.D.s Performed the Filthiest Task in the Dirtiest War: Red Cross Women Volunteers, 1914-1918," *Journal of Social History* 30, no.3, (Spring 1997), under "I," (accessed October 3, 2014).

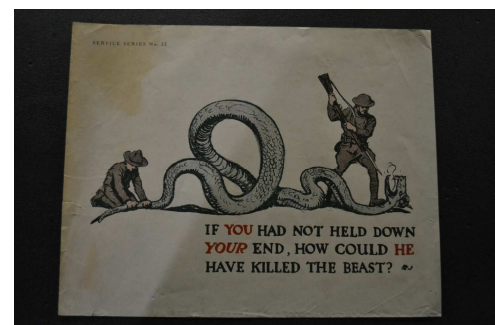
The symbolism in the posters transcended attempting to get people to feel national pride. Some posters portrayed the enemies and their leaders as being anything from devil-like characters to buffoons. *Figure 6*, which is one of the many thousands of designs for the Fourth Liberty Loan drive of World War I, depicts the German Kaiser tiptoeing on a sea of bayonets that American soldiers are holding. The image of the Kaiser is a caricature. His depiction is gangly with an oversized nose and mustache, and he is moving along the top of American soldiers with his arms out trying to balance himself. The Creel committee chose designs like this to help the viewing public dehumanize the enemy and make them look like clowns.



**Figure 6, "We Closed the Road to Paris - We're on Our Way to Berlin"**

Posters also depicted them as beasts. Some of the best examples of turning the enemies into subhumans are *Figure 7* and *Figure 8*. Both posters focus on the Germans. Dehumanizing the enemy was common when the poster portrayed the image of an enemy soldier. Making the enemy seem as though they are not a human diminished any support for the enemy at home, since the American soldiers were only killing beast instead of humans.

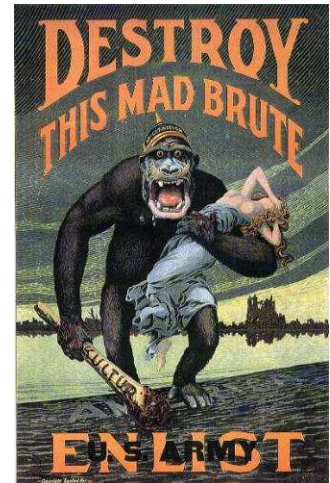
In *Figure 7*, two American soldiers are depicted killing a snake that is much larger than them. One has the snake by the tail, holding it down to the ground. The other has his boot on the snake's neck and is about to bring his rifle, which has a bayonet fixed to the front, down onto the snake's head. The snake is wearing a pickelhaube, the pointed helmet worn by the German military in World War I. Many of America's anti-German posters depicted the German soldier wearing the readily identifiable helmet. The text on the



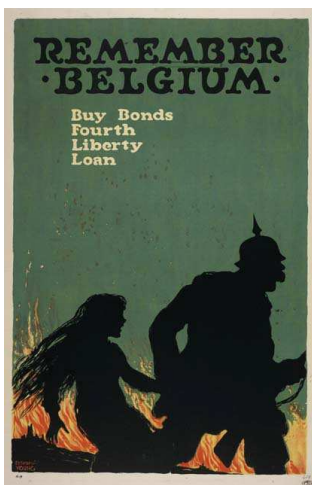
**Figure 7, If You had Not Held Down Your End, How Could He Have Killed the Beast?**

poster infers that the American soldier holding the tail of the snake is either the average worker or military personnel who were not on the front line. The artist chose to use the image of a snake to represent the Germans, most likely due to the snake's connection to evil through the Bible. Using the imagery of snakes usually conjures feelings of fear and hatred in the viewer.

*Figure 8* is one of the more famous posters to come out of the war and is currently widely available in poster shops. It portrays a large ape carrying a blonde female, who could possibly be Lady Liberty, away from the ruins of a city. She is half-naked and has her hand over her eyes as though she is crying. In the right hand, the ape is carrying a large club that is inscribed with the word “Kultur”<sup>41</sup>, which seems to infer that the Germans way of life destroyed the city in the background. Similar to the snake in *Figure 7*, the ape, which is a representation of a German soldier, is



**Figure 8, *Destroy This Mad Brute- Enlist***



**Figure 9, *Remember Belgium***

wearing a pickelhaube, so the viewer can quickly identify who the ape is suppose to depict. The helmet is inscribed with the word “Militarism”. The use of that term, along with “kultur”, are meant to attack German society and blame them for starting the war. The image as a whole would be familiar to the public because of the well-known stories of the German invasion of Belgium, which is also the subject of *Figure 9*. Stories of German soldiers raping and killing women and nuns were common during and after the invasion

<sup>41</sup> According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary it is a “Culture emphasizing practical efficiency and individual subordination to the state.”

of the Low Countries<sup>42</sup>. Consequently, an image of a German soldier carrying off a half-naked woman would be identifiable to the average person who followed the news of the war. The overall message of this poster was that, if sons and fathers did not want their mothers and wives to end up like the woman in the poster, then the men should enlist to stop the Germans.

There are two important messages that the artist wanted the viewer to see. People walking by the poster would immediately notice that the ape represents a German soldier, and the use of an ape has multiple inferences. The artist likely picked an ape because of the brutish and dimwittedness connotation that comes with the symbol. Dehumanizing the enemy was an important propaganda campaign, so using an animal in place of the human helps to make everyone think that the enemy is subhuman and that they are animals. Hating a group of inhuman monsters is easier than hating a group of people with whom many Americans shared an ancestry.

The design for *Figure 9* uses a similar subject matter, because it also deals with the invasion of Belgium. However, this poster does not simply allude to the events in Belgium; the image clearly states, "Remember Belgium". This plate, along with *Figures 6* and *10*, are part of the Fourth Liberty Loan bond drive, so the artist that designed the poster sought to enrage people. Using an image of a German soldier who is wearing a pickelhaube as an identifier, and dragging a girl would reignite feelings of anger over the events. The burning town in the background suggests that the soldier destroyed the town and then took the woman captive. That anger could aid in selling more bonds, because people would want to stop anyone who would commit those kinds of actions. The woman is one of the more subtle aspects of the poster that makes the viewer upset. Her image is clearly smaller than that of the soldier's, and her small size would possibly make the female an adolescent. Another potentially disturbing part of the female is the lack of definition of her clothes, compared to the clearly defined clothes of her captor. This

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<sup>42</sup> Jeff Lipkes, *Rehearsals: The German Army in Belgium, August 1914* (Leuven, BE: Leuven University Press, 2007), 163-164.



suggests she is in either torn clothes or her sleepwear and that the soldier took her from her home and bed at night.

The image of the enemy being something other than human is also the theme of *Figures 10* and *11*. The Barron Collier Advertising Agency designed both posters, which is evident in the imagery and drawing style. Barron Collier's advertising agency made many posters for the Patriotic Series, which released work from 1916 to 1918<sup>43</sup>. *Figure 11* clearly states the name of the artist in the bottom right corner. The poster also indicates that it was a part of his second patriotic series. *Figure 10* may not be from the same series, but the poster is most likely from the same person.

Kaiser Wilhelm II and the devil appear in both posters, but the action and the message is different in each. *Figure 10*, which is a part of the Fourth Liberty



**Figure 10, *All Civilization Stand Against These Two***

Loan campaign, shows the devil talking to the Kaiser, as though they are planning the war together. At the top of the poster, the text “All Civilization stands against these two-” is large and helps emphasize the message that the Kaiser is working with or for the devil. The portrayal of the two figures on the poster is as red otherworldly beings, with pointed ears and exaggerated facial hair. This is another way that the artist led the viewer into hating the German enemy. The artist exploited the large number of religious people in the United States by using the image of the devil, which would help to reinforce the idea that the destruction of the enemy is paramount.

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<sup>43</sup> LaBrecque, Kelly, “Persuasion by Design: World War I, The Committee on Public Information, and the Effectiveness of Good Poster Design” (master’s thesis, University of New Hampshire, 2008), 45.



The image of the devil and Kaiser was meant to cause the viewer to feel disgusted and obligated to support the war effort, whether consciously or subconsciously. The person reading the message would see the next lines and choose to follow its advice. “Use every ounce of energy-every dollar at your command...” it reads on the side, and in large text that is the same shade of red as the devil and Kaiser “4<sup>th</sup> Liberty Loan”. Once the viewer makes the association between the Kaiser and devil, the average person is suppose to be so disgusted that he goes out and supports the war effort by buying war bonds.



**Figure 11, *As Good Month's Business***

The viewer was likely to make a similar association with *Figure 11*. Again, the image of the Kaiser and the devil is employed. However, this time they are looking over a monthly report. The aim of this poster is to

outrage the viewer and generate hatred for the Germans. The image of the report states, “BABIES.....164”, “CHILDREN...178”, “WOMEN.....292” and “NON-COMBATANTS”, and to the side of the report, there is a comment that says, “A Good Month’s Business”. The artist’s objective is to make the enemy look like monsters and murderers of innocent victims. In the poster, the Kaiser looks like he handed the report to the devil, who is reading over the paper. Similar to *Figure 10*, the figures are red and look otherworldly. The devil has a clear smile on his face, which seems to indicate that he is pleased with the Kaiser’s results. The overall message of this poster is to degrade the enemy, and to aid the constant campaign to despise the image of the enemy. The public needed to hate the enemy and feel like they were not even human, which could potentially help in gaining support for the war.

As seen in many of the previously mentioned posters, the idea of using countermeans “to vilify and degrade the enemy and to combat sabotage, noncooperation, and apathy” was prevalent

during the First World War<sup>44</sup>. Degrading and vilifying the enemy was a common theme that makes up the composition of *Figures 6, 7, and 9-13*. *Figure 12* and *Figure 13* are especially good examples of using countermeans against the enemy. Caricature and ridicule are the most common uses of countermeans in American propaganda<sup>45</sup>.

The liberty bonds campaigns were some of the most important efforts of the war, since the sale of the bonds helped to pay for the war. *Figure 12* was part of these solicitations. The poster contains an image of a German soldier, whose fingers and bayonet have blood covering them. *Figure 12* also seeks to be scary or menacing to the viewer. In the image, the soldier, who is identifiably German due to the pickelhaube, is large and looming over the ruins of Europe and looking across the Atlantic ocean. The image suggests that Europe has fallen to the Central



**Figure 12, *Beat Back the Hun with Liberty Bonds***

Powers and now America is next. Blood on the fingers and bayonet are a part of the propaganda aim at vilifying the enemy, because the imagery suggests that the Germans killed everyone in their path. The bayonet is a symbol of war and blood a symbol of death, so the image of this bloody bayonet means the Germans defeated their European opponents. However, blood on the fingers seems to suggest even more. It could symbolize hand-to-hand trench warfare, the raping of the land, or how the Germans scraped and dug their way across Europe. No matter the meaning, the design of the image is ominous.

The image on *Figure 12* contains another fundamental attribute that artists used in the designs of their posters, the use of a common slogan<sup>46</sup>. *Figure 12* has one of the most famous slogans of the First World War. “Beat back the HUN” appears in large script across the middle

<sup>44</sup> *Posters of World War I and World War II*, 8.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 7.

of the poster, and underneath it reads “with Liberty Bonds”. Slogans became so popular in the propaganda campaigns that some of them, like “beat back the Hun”, entered the collective national memory<sup>47</sup>. Making the American public automatically associate the Germans with the vicious enemy in posters like *Figure 12*, helped to sell more bonds, recruit more troops, and conserve more food.

Plate 5 offers a very different look at the enemy than any of the other posters analyzed so far. This image aims at causing the viewer to



**Figure 13, *Defeat the Kaiser and His U-Boats***

feel guilty about consuming too much wheat that would not be available for the war effort. The artist is able to accomplish this by using a caricature of the Kaiser looking at a u-boat that has just sunk a ship. In early November 1914, the British declared the waters around Germany a war zone and set up a blockade to prevent goods from going into or out of the country<sup>48</sup>. Due to the success of the blockade, the German U-boats patrolled the North Sea and the Atlantic in order to cause havoc among the merchant ships bringing goods, food, and people to Great Britain<sup>49</sup>. Therefore, the average person would have understood the meaning of the image on the poster. Food became an important aspect of fighting the war, so posters like *Figure 13* helped to remind people not to be wasteful<sup>50</sup>. The wording on the poster tells the whole story by saying, “Defeat the KAISER and his U-BOATS[,] Victory depends on which falls first, food or frightfulness[,] eat less[,] WHEAT[,] waste nothing”. The outcome of the war is there for the viewer to read.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> John McDermott, “Trading with the Enemy: British Business and the Law During the First World War,” *Canadian Journal of History* 32, no.2 (August 1997): 203, (accessed February 1, 2015).

<sup>49</sup> Beth Irwin Lewis, Paul Paret, and Peter Paret, *Persuasive Images: Posters of War and Revolution from the Hoover Institution Archives*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 78.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

This poster is essentially being truthful to the person reading it, and *Figure 13*'s success hinges on the average person's willingness to believe and follow the message.

The last main type of propaganda poster conveyed myths and metaphors that attempted to draw the viewer into believing and following the message through inspiration. *Figure 14* and *15* exemplify posters that used these different means of persuasion. Both posters attempt to get men to enlist in the armed forces.



**Figure 14, *Treat 'Em Rough!*  
*Join the Tanks***

The depiction on *Figure 14* intends to drive men to the recruiting office to join the newly formed Tank Corps. Tanks were a new technology developed during the war, and the United States formed the Tank Corps using British heavy and French light tanks<sup>51</sup>. Men were needed to operate the tanks, so a call for recruitment went out. The image on *Figure 14* depicts a large cat, its claws out and fangs bared, jumping into a hectic tank battle.

The background is an inferno of red, yellow, and orange, and the foreground is an imagined depiction of tank warfare.

"TREAT'EM ROUGH! JOIN THE TANKS United States Tanks Corps" appears in large lettering across the front of *Figure 14*, and the melding of the verbal and artistic message intends to be inspirational. The artist likely wanted the viewer to see the explosive and exciting imagery and perceive life in the Tank Corps as thrilling and novel.

Howard Chandler Christy designed recruitment posters for most of the armed forces, and many knew him for his use of sex as the main driving force behind getting men to recruit. Most of his posters portrayed a young woman with red lips, curly brunette hair that is blowing in the

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<sup>51</sup> "Patton Museum Receives WWI French Tanks," *Armor* 112, no.6 (November/December 2003): 54, (accessed January 19, 2014)

wind, and dressed in a military uniform<sup>52</sup>. *Figure 15* is an example of Christy's work. The focus of the poster is a brown-haired woman who is wearing a Navy uniform that shows part of her chest. The writing on the poster is in her voice and reads, "Gee!! I WISH I WERE A MAN[.] I'd JOIN The NAVY". There are multiple suggested meanings for this poster. The most probable intent is that she is standing provocatively with her back arched and breast pushed forward, and that coupled with the words on the poster suggests that the message of this poster is that women are attracted to men in the Navy. However, there could be another meaning behind this image. Christy could be trying to shame men into joining the Navy. The image of a woman in the uniform saying she wishes she could join could be hinting that she is willing to join the Navy, even though she is a woman; so why would the man looking at the poster not be willing to do the same? The message at the bottom of the poster helps to advance that message, because Christy writes, "BE A MAN AND DO IT". The caption suggests that if a woman is willing then a man defiantly should.



**Figure 15, *Gee!! I Wish I were a Man- I'd Join the Navy***

### **World War II Posters and Their Themes**

World War II propaganda posters had many of the same themes as the posters from the First World War. The images on the posters varied depending on the artist's style, the nature of the drive, and the conveyance of the message. However, there were certain commonalities that all of the posters shared in depicting particular people or attempting to communicate a certain meaning. The posters of the Second World War had many of the same messages and subtext, and the propaganda aims were the same. Many contained images designed with countermeans, slogans, and symbolism. Images on the posters, and the art styles, however, changed between the

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<sup>52</sup> *Persuasive Images*, 56.

wars. Artists drew the enemy as more of a caricature in World War II, and the art style of the posters mostly changed from Romanticism to Realism. Many World War II posters now used pictures instead of drawings, and the depiction of women changed.

One of the most apparent and wide spread uses of countermeans was in the recurring imagery of the enemy as caricatures. When showing the Germans, the artists would “depict them as an evil regime...”, and the soldiers would often be faceless and emotionless<sup>53</sup>. Hitler was often the target of a joke, and the artists employed humor when drawing his figure<sup>54</sup>. He was generally depicted as fat with a comb-over and having a large dark mustache the width of his nose.

The American’s anti-German World War II posters were different from those aimed at the Japanese. The biggest difference in the depictions of the two enemies was the caricatures and what is occurring in the rest of the image. The Japanese looked like either rats or simians, while the Germans maintained their human figures. Some of the more common portrayals of the Germans depicted them as almost faceless machines-like soldiers.

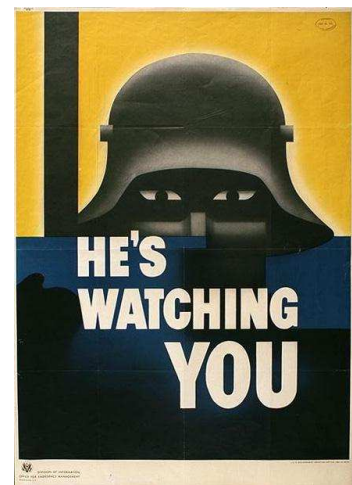


Figure 16, *He's Watching You*

*He's Watching You*, Figure 16, is an American anti-German poster that is characteristic of other American posters that depicted German soldiers. This poster had no clear destination for placing it around a community. The message was vague enough to allow someone posting the artwork to place it anywhere, whether at a factory, train station, grocery store, or restaurant. The soldier has the iconic blank stare on what little of his face is visible. He looks like a robot, or some kind of inhuman being or construct. The soldier wears a steel helmet that the Nazis originally used as an “icon of military prowess and national pride”; however, the allies used this

<sup>53</sup> Nicholas John Cull, David Holbrook Culbert, and David Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present* (Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 450.

<sup>54</sup> *Posters of World War I and World War II*, 12.



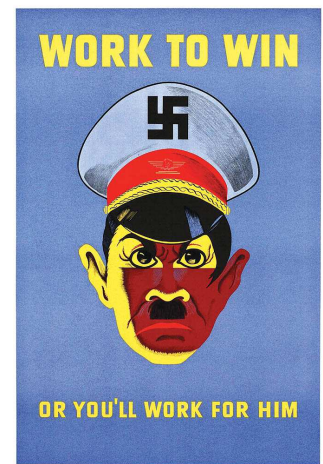
symbol to “encapsulate Hitler’s sinister and menacing regime.”<sup>55</sup> The image of this soldier looks menacing, and the designer seems to want the viewer to feel uneasy about the soldier watching the viewer in that manner. With the vague wording, the viewer could take many meanings out of this piece, especially if this poster was near another propaganda poster that is a part of some other campaign, like a drive that advocates working harder or being careful what one says.



wearing underwear that has a swastika pattern, and destroyed panzers and other machinery lay at his feet. At the bottom of the poster, a message reads, “we will - if we keep ‘em firing”. The intended message of this poster is to spur ammunition production, so the American military can continue to fire their weapons. The caricature of Hitler is typical, because it shows him as inept and the focus of the joke. The phrase “catch him with his ‘panzers’ down” is a play on words and uses the panzer instead of pants. This clearly intends to be a joke and make Hitler look oafish. The words along with the imagery infer that Hitler and the Nazis are not smart, and they did not expect the American military to be powerful.

The caricature on *Figure 18* is also of Hitler, and the image contains many of the common characteristics used in propaganda posters. A large nose and very large ears help make Hitler look goofy, but not too much. The poster is both serious and silly, a choice apparently

*Figure 17* portrays an image of Hitler that is indicative of many American posters having him as the primary figure. His nose is slightly exaggerated and he has a sheepish look on his face. Hitler is bent over in his uniform, except for his pants. He is



**Figure 18, *Work to Win- Or You'll Work for Him***

<sup>55</sup> *Persuasive Images*, 108.

made by the artists. By making the caricature silly, the public still sees Hitler as a joke, but the artwork has a degree of seriousness to it, which is evident in the serious look on his face. Hitler's stern look supports the message that is on the poster. This poster was a part of a campaign to increase productivity. The phrase "work to win or you'll work for him" was an attempt to prompt people into working harder, and that is probably why the artist decided to give Hitler a stern look.

Artists depicted the Japanese very differently than the Germans. When picturing the Japanese, artists much more commonly employed sub-human qualities. Japanese soldiers were often caricatures that ridiculed them as being "rats, apes, menacing monsters, or comic characters with huge teeth and glasses..."<sup>56</sup> The theme of dehumanizing the enemy was not limited to the Japanese, although their depictions were often more animal like. This kind of propaganda was not new. There were many propaganda campaigns in the past and within other countries that used similar techniques. Dehumanizing the enemy helps the average person to disconnect the enemy from being humans to being below humans. Making people believe that their enemy is below oneself allows for hatred of the enemy to occur.

There often was a set way to depict the two enemies. Setting a uniform method in



Figure 19, *Keep This Horror From Your Home*

illustrating the Axis Powers separately made distinguishing each side easier when looking at the posters. The Office of War Information (OWI) allowed the artists who designed the posters some freedoms in the depictions. However, there was also some unity in the caricatures.

*Keep This Horror from Your Home*, Figure 19, attempted to help sell war bonds, which aided in paying for the war. It depicts a Japanese soldier holding a knife to an American woman's neck. The

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 199.



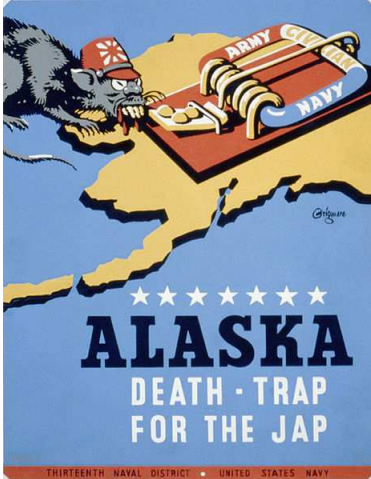
woman has a look of terror on her face, while the soldier holds his hand almost completely over her mouth. This implies that the soldier is about to rape or murder the woman. The caricature of the Japanese soldier is typical, with big lips, a thin mustache, small eyes, and sharpened teeth. This poster is an example of the use of scare tactics in American propaganda posters. The imagery of a frightened woman who is in mid-scream with a Japanese soldier holding a knife at her throat would be a disturbing image for both men and women. “Keep this horror from your home” is clearly emblazoned at the top of the poster, and the design mixed with those words and imagery, makes people afraid of the savagery of the enemy. With the point clearly illustrated, the poster answers how to prevent this from occurring, that is by investing in war bonds.

*Figure 20*, is another example of anti-Japanese artwork on an American poster. It is part of the poster campaigns entitled “This is the Enemy”, designed to reinforce racial stereotypes and provoked the viewer into supporting the war. The image on this poster is of a Japanese soldier who has many of the common iconographic symbols used in depicting a caricature of a Japanese person: slanted eyes, simian-like arms, and rat-like whiskers. Slung over his shoulder is a naked white woman. Similar to the image in *Figure 19*, the artists seems to be inferring that the soldier is about to rape the



**Figure 20, *This is the Enemy***

woman. In the background, people hang from nooses, being stabbed by bayonets, and a town or city appears to be burning. The overall message of this poster is the need of every person to do their part in the war effort so what this poster depicts does not happen to Americans.



**Figure 21, *Alaska- Death-Trap- For the Jap***

*Figure 21*, was a product of the United States Navy and addressed the defense of Alaska. Instead of using a simian looking figure, the artist of this poster chose a rodent. The animal has the clear signs of being representative of a Japanese person, and the most revealing feature is the rodent's hat, which has the design of the rising sun on the front. Slanted eyes and large sharp teeth that overhang the bottom jaw are some of the other common stereotypes for Japanese people that are in this poster. The poster shows the rodent going up to a trap that is set with the Army, Navy, and civilians, and the poster says "Alaska, Death-Trap, For The Jap". The message is that if the Japanese attack Alaska, then they will fail due to the joint efforts of the Army, Navy, and civilian work force.

The anti-Japanese posters *Figure 19*, *20*, and *21* are different than the anti-German posters *Figures 16*, *17*, and *18* because they dehumanize the Japanese in a different way by portraying them as barbaric and subhuman. The first three posters illustrate American anger at the Japanese, and show how they viewed them as not human. On *Figure 19*, the Japanese soldier has sharpened teeth and a facial structure that looks somewhat like a monkey. Similarly, on *Figure 20*, the Japanese soldier has a simian look in his arms and body position, but instead of holding a knife to a woman's throat, the soldier is carrying away a naked white woman. Americans would have viewed the Japanese as animalistic for two primary reasons. First, the attack on Pearl Harbor was a complete surprise. The Japanese did not declare war before the raid, even though the Japanese plan called for a declaration of war to arrive in Washington shortly before the attack. However, the message did not get to Washington in time and people viewed

the attack as unprovoked and treacherous<sup>57</sup>. The second reason deals with the destruction of Nanking, which took place between December 1937 and January 1938, and the atrocities the Japanese military committed against the Chinese civilian population<sup>58</sup>. Americans viewed the slaughter and rapes as being inhuman. This is most likely the reason why the Japanese soldiers, in *Figure 19* and *17*, are attacking and overpowering the woman. The image would inspire fear and a sense of needing to protect American families and women from the same atrocities that the Chinese faced in Nanking.

The American posters helped provoke a sense of hatred for their enemies. American soldiers in the Pacific Theater did not always take Japanese soldiers captive, and often would shoot them if they were surrendering or wounded<sup>59</sup>. This was partly due to the hatred that the American soldiers developed, in part because some Japanese soldiers would pretend to be surrendering and when the American soldier got close enough, the Japanese soldier would blow themselves up along with their captor<sup>60</sup>. As a result, American soldiers would sometimes execute Japanese soldiers before anyone was able to get close to them. American soldiers also had to deal with the Japanese government telling their people stories about Americans doing horrifying things to their prisoners. Honor was an important aspect of their society, so many preferred death over surrender<sup>61</sup>. As a result, many Japanese would commit suicide or fight until they died, instead of surrendering. The posters that the Americans released reflected the realities, and aided the anti-Japanese sentiment.

The anti-Japanese posters tried to influence people to hate the Japanese, which is evident in the more visceral depiction of the Japanese compared to Germans. Anti-German posters

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<sup>57</sup> "Banzai!: Japan (1931–1942)." *The World at War*. DVD. Directed by Hugh Raggett. Burbank: A&E Home Video, 2003.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid

<sup>59</sup> John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 45.

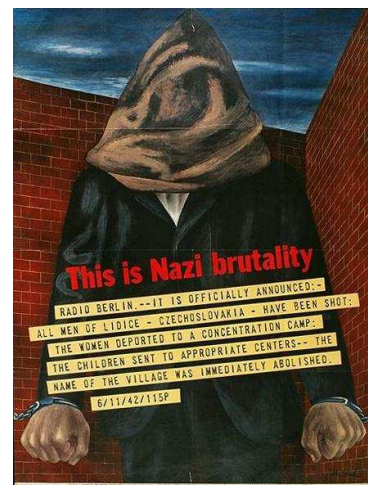
<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> James Brooke, "Okinawa Suicides and Japan's Army: Burying the Truth?." *New York Times*, June 20, 2005.

focused more on showing Hitler as a joke and his soldiers as emotionless and menacing, which is clear in *Figures 16, 17, and 18*. Both approaches employed in posters depicting America's enemies conveyed them in such a way that the American people would not feel empathy for the Japanese or Germans. However, the imagery used against the Japanese was harsher and more racially charged than the depictions of the Germans. Posters showing the Germans evoked the emotions of fear and humor, whereas the anti-Japanese posters elicited hatred more than any other emotion. Showing women being threatened and carried away by Japanese soldiers made the viewer angry and, to a lesser degree, fearful.

Another widely used countermeans theme concerned the enemy's cruelty. Posters portrayed this imagery in different ways, with some posters showing a drawing of a specific event, and others having a line of script accompanying a poster to explain the image. The images on *Figures 22 and 30* are examples of conveying German and Japanese cruelty.

*Figure 22* depicts a simple brick wall background and a man standing in the foreground with what looks like a burlap sack over his head. In the lower middle of the poster, there is writing that states, "This is Nazi Brutality", and below that message is a story about a Czechoslovakian town where the Nazis murdered or moved all of the citizens to concentration camps. The colors used are mostly dark, which helps to emote a somber and dooming attitude. The figure of the man against the brick wall about to die also portrays a sense of a looming doom, which is aided by his large form and the darkened sky above. Anyone viewing this poster would read the message and most likely react the way the artist intends, which is to be afraid of that happening in Europe and outraged at the Nazis for destroying that town.



**Figure 22, *This is Nazi Brutality***

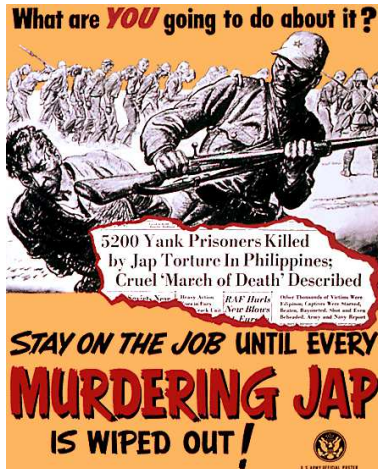


Figure 23, *What are You Going to do About It?*

*Figure 23* uses the cruelty of the Japanese as the poster's focus. It portrays a Japanese soldier, whose mouth looks simian with large teeth and protruding lips, hitting an American prisoner in the head with the butt of his rifle. In the background, a column of prisoners of war are marching. The foreground has a large newspaper clipping discussing the deaths of American soldiers on a long forced march in the Philippines, which would become known as the "Bataan death march". The designer of the poster wants the viewer to feel outrage at the Japanese treatment of the American prisoners of war. Words on the rest of the poster ask a rhetorical question of the viewer. "What are YOU going to do about it? STAY ON THE JOB UNTIL EVERY MURDERING JAP IS WIPED OUT!" is the answer to what people should do when they feel horrified by the events of the war.

World War I posters had similar messages and use of countermeans. One could see a resemblance between the World War I posters portraying Germans raping and destroying Belgium, on *Figures 12, 9, and 8*, and the World War II images on *Figures 22 and 23*. The sets of posters from both wars focus on the cruelty of the enemy and remembering why the war is necessary. The messages of the posters are similar, both attempt to remind the public about previous events in the wars that the public deemed horrible. In all of the images, the artist wanted people to feel anger about the events, and subsequently the viewer would follow the message on the poster.

The symbolism, which was prevalent in World War I posters, was common on many of the posters from the Second World War. Some of the themes were the same, such as the use of patriotic symbols and remembrance of past points of patriotic pride. These themes are present on *Figures 24 and 25*.

The juxtaposition of American troops in 1943 and 1778 makes up the composition of *Figure 24*. This poster loomed large in many public places, and it is a call to arms.<sup>62</sup> The intention of the poster is to inspire men to volunteer for the armed services, or continue to help the war effort at home. “AMERICANS will always fight for liberty” sweeps across the bottom of the poster, helping to reinforce the idea that the current war is worth fighting. In the image, the soldiers from 1943 are walking past what looks like soldiers from the



**Figure 24, *Americans- Will Always Fight for Liberty***

Continental Army, looking at the World War II soldiers with approval. Using symbols of the past helps to inspire the soldiers in the present. *Figure 2* is a World War I equivalent. It depicts a



**Figure 25, *United We Win***

romantic image of the United States Calvary in the background. Both posters intend to persuade people to follow each poster’s message through recognizable patriotic imagery.

Inspiration was the major driving force behind most of the patriotic posters. An example is *Figure 25*, which depicts a white man and a black man working together on what seems to be an airplane part. A large American flag takes up almost half of the background, and the bottom of the poster reads “UNITED WE WIN”. This poster served two main purposes. During the war racial tension erupted on occasions. President Roosevelt desegregated the defense industry with the signing of Executive Order 8802 on June 25, 1941<sup>63</sup>. The United States needed as many people as they could get to work in the defense industry, because war armaments need to be sent overseas to

<sup>62</sup> James Aulich, *War Posters: Weapons of Mass Communication*, (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 162.

<sup>63</sup> Executive Order no. 8802, *Prohibition of Discrimination in the Defense Industry*, 1941.

help fight the war. In 1943, race riots erupted in Detroit, and grew from a small confrontation to a larger fight between groups of whites and blacks<sup>64</sup>. The United States government decided to release posters like this to promote integration. The African American community was already helping the war effort, but racism was threatening their efforts. Therefore, images like *Figure 25* intended to restore African American trust in the government and quell the racial tensions<sup>65</sup>. This poster also sought to inspire the home front to work harder. The men in the image are functioning as a team, and all facets of the war effort required people working together in that manner.

Even though there is not a World War I racial equivalent to *Figure 25*, the poster still contains many of the same ideas as the patriotic posters in the First World War, like *Figure 3*. Both posters depict people working hard for the war. While *Figure 25* prominently displays the American flag, which provides a large splash of color and patriotic inspiration. *Figure 3* also contains a flag that stands out to the viewer. The overall intent of both posters is to motivate people to work harder and join the war effort at home.

There was one major change between the posters of the wars, and that is the role of women. Women did play a role in World War I, primarily through the YMCA, but the use and the amount of jobs for women expanded in the Second World War. *Figures 26, 27, and 28* are examples of World War II posters that portray less sexualized women, and there were a larger variety of calls for women to serve the United States war machine.

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<sup>64</sup> Marilyn S. Johnson, "Gender, Race, and Rumours: Re-Examining the 1943 Race Riots," *Gender and History* 10, no.2 (July 1998): 252-55, (accessed December 1, 2014)

<sup>65</sup> National Archives and Records Administration, *World War II Posters: Power of Persuasion*, 1998. <http://ruby.fgcu.edu/courses/tdugas/ids3301/acrobat/persuasion.pdf>



Views of women changed between wars. Women began entering the workforce in increasing numbers throughout the early nineteenth century, and women gained the right to vote in the interwar years<sup>66</sup>. The role of women in American society was slowly changing, and the image of women in war posters reflects that change. During World War I, women were symbols of femininity and desirable objects. In World War II that image continued, but there was an additional new element of importance. Artists depicted women as vital parts of the wartime effort, which is evident in *Figures 26, 27, and 28*. There was a labor shortage due to the large numbers of men who chose or had to serve in the military. Therefore, for the United States to maintain a state of total war, women who previously did not work needed to get a job as a nurse, factory worker, or secretary.<sup>67</sup>



**Figure 26, *Enlist in a Proud Profession!- Join the- U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps***

The image women in World War II posters maintained an air of femininity. *Figure 26* focuses on enlistment into the United States Cadet Nurse Corps. On the poster is a woman who looks glamorous with red lipstick and blonde hair styled back. However, she is wearing the uniform of the Cadet Nurse Corps. Her image sends a message to women that they would not lose their femininity if they joined the military. At the top of the poster, the phrase “Enlist in a Proud Profession!” reinforces that point. The war effort needed women, so the posters needed to do everything possible to promote working for the war effort to every woman.

<sup>66</sup> Jaber F. Gubrium, “Urban Ethnography of the 1920s Working Girl. *Gender, Work & Organization*,” *Gender, Work, and Organization* 14, no. 3 (April 2007): 247–249, (accessed November 2, 2015)

<sup>67</sup> *World War II Posters: Power of Persuasion*.





Figure 27, *We Can Do It!*

*Figure 27* may be the most iconic poster to survive World War II. Even though the war ended seventy years ago, the image of this poster remains part of modern society. The poster's message is still relevant and used by various women's rights groups. One of the aims of the OWI was to change the image of the ideal woman, and Rosie the Riveter was a symbol of that change.<sup>68</sup> However, James J. Kimble and Lester C.

Olson strongly contend that the poster "We Can Do IT!" would have had little effect on the OWI's aims at changing minds. The poster ran in limited quantities and was only displayed on the walls in Westinghouse factories for thirteen days.<sup>69</sup> Considering the locations of the poster and the subject matter, "We Can Do It!" attempts to inspire women in the workforce to work harder, instead of recruitment. The imagery on *Figure 27*, as well as other posters like it, attempts to balance the traditional workplace theme of discipline with patriotism and sacrifice.<sup>70</sup> These themes were present in many of the posters aimed at the workplace, because attitudes towards working women needed to change in order to maintain a cohesive working environment. Women were critical to the home front, and they needed to work jobs that men traditionally held.



"Women in war[,] WE CAN'T WIN WITHOUT THEM" is the message sprawled across *Figure 28*, and encompasses the OWI's overall premise for most of the posters depicting women. It does not try to hide the message in any way. The poster pictures a woman, who is wearing a

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> James J. Kimble and Lester C. Olson, "Visual Rhetoric Representing Rosie the Riveter: Myth and Misconception in J. Howard Miller's 'We Can Do It!' Poster," *Rhetoric* (Winter, 2006): 535-547, (accessed February 21, 2015)

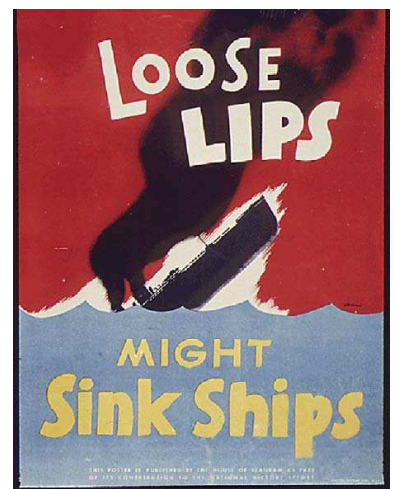
<sup>70</sup> William L Bird and Harry R. Rubenstein, *Design for Victory: World War II Posters on the American Home Front*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 78.

dress and has her hair fashionably styled, working on what looks like a bomb casing. She is doing a job that is vital to the war effort, and the poster argues that point with the words above and below her. *Figure 28* seeks to inform the public about the need for women to join the workforce. Posters like this, countered the perception that large numbers of women working was not normal, so many people would object to the idea.

Some aspects of the way posters depicted women remained the same. World War II artists maintained much of the feminine figure and appearance by including fashionably styled hair and makeup, as in *Figures 26, 27, and 28*. The image of women in World War I in *Figure 9* had the same features but many aspects did change.

Slogans were another important aspect of the World War II posters. Some of the popular sayings became a part of the national zeitgeist. In some instances, slogans became so popular, or had a revival, that people today recognize them.

*Figure 29* is an example of a World War II slogan that is still



**Figure 29, *Loose Lips- Might Sink Ships***

present in popular culture. Not all of the slogans became popular, such as the slogan on *Figure 30*, which may have seen some use, but did not make a large impact on popular culture during the early part of the war. “Remember Pearl Harbor” was the most popular slogan that came from the attack on Pearl Harbor. The famous slogan on *Figure 29* is “Loose LIPS[,] MIGHT[,] Sink Ships”, is still a well known phrase. As a whole, the poster is simplistic, with the entire poster consisting of four colors. The font uses rounded letters, which are wide, and appear as though a child wrote them. In the background is a black ship that is sinking into a light blue ocean, with a red sky above. A large red sky reiterates the phrase’s point, because red is often associated with blood and death. This poster was a part of an important and large campaign to stop information

leakage to enemy agents who may be in the United States. The slogan on *Figure 29* is the focal point, because it is the message that the OWI wanted to impress upon the American people.

*Figure 30* exemplifies another war poster focused on the slogan across the center of the image. “AVENGE DECEMBER 7” appears in large red characters across the center point of the poster. The message has a similar tone as “Remember the Alamo” from the Texas Revolution. Both phrases intend to make people angry and want to strike back at the enemy. *Figure 30* depicts a large American sailor with his fist raised and the Pearl Harbor attack on the bottom half of the



poster. The design of the poster makes the viewer upset and want to join the military. As a result of the December 7 attack, the country was at war, and men needed to sign up to fill the ranks of the American armed forces. Therefore, posters like *Figure 30* went up all around the country to get men to sign up. Slogans like “Avenge December 7” helped to remind people about the outrage they should be feeling. That was one of the main purposes of slogans. They needed to be appealing and memorable so the phrase can easily be stuck in everyone’s minds.

**Figure 30, *Avenge- December 7***

Since posters are a visual media, the artists often designed posters incorporating slogans from the main propaganda campaign at the time. This is evident in the World War I posters shown on *Figures 12* and *9*, and in the World War II posters, such as *Figures 29* and *30*. In both wars, slogans focused on either important aspects of the war or making the home front believe that the war is just. *Figures 12*, *9*, and *30* aimed to make the public believe that the war is worth fighting. The slogans on those posters dealt with the brutality of the enemy and an event that helps to remind people that the enemy did something that warrants retaliation. On *Figures 12* and *9* the slogan, along with the artwork, remind the viewer of the German invasion of Belgium and

what occurred to the populace, whereas *Figure 30* solely wants the viewer to relive the anger they felt when they heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor. The ideas embedded in these three posters are the same, even though the *Figures 12* and *9* are from a war that occurred 22 years prior. *Figure 29* also addresses the brutality of the enemy in sinking commerce vessels, while keeping attention on what the home front can do to help win the war. World War I had similar posters such as *Figure 13*, which implies to eat less wheat. Both posters serve the same function. They show the people at home a small piece of the reality of the war, while instructing everyone on how they can do their part.

## CHAPTER III

### ROMANTICISM AND REALISM: A COMPARISON OF THE WAR POSTERS

Although there were similarities between the posters of each war, many of the posters and the tactics behind them differed. World War I posters contained images that were indicative of the final stages of Romanticism, while the images on World War II posters contained more Realism with fewer attempts to mislead the public. Another reason for the differences in styles between the wars, was due to the ardent isolationism that existed prior to World War I. There were isolationists who were against the United States Joining World War II, but the attack on Pearl Harbor greatly diminished any argument against entering the war.

One of the most apparent changes in art styles and composition between the wars was the transformation from Romanticism to Realism. Romanticism intends to elicit emotions using idealism and passion<sup>71</sup>. Facts were less important than the sensational or any kind of image that would arouse deep feelings of anger or patriotism. Realism is completely different. It uses authenticity and accurately attempts to present the world to the viewer, in order to make a statement<sup>72</sup>. The transformation of art styles between the wars was due to a change culture.

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<sup>71</sup> "What Is Romanticism?," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 19, no. 4 (January 1966):2-3, (accessed January 28, 2016)

<sup>72</sup> Willis H. Truitt, "Realism," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 37, no. 2 (Winter 1978), 141-143, (accessed January 28, 2016)

There were many different reasons for the transition of techniques. Postwar disillusionment was one of the primary contributors to the change<sup>73</sup>. After World War I, the idea of war changed dramatically, because of the scale of destruction. War was no longer romanticized, and as a result, the idea of bravery and honor changed.

Postwar disillusionment was the result of the public discovering the war was completely different than the government led them to believe. This was ultimately the death of Romanticism, and lead to the acceptance of Realism. After World War I, people were appalled at the slaughter and overall destruction in Europe<sup>74</sup>. Large portions of France and Belgium were annihilated and an entire generation of men disappeared from Russia, Germany, France, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. Civilians and soldiers were angry at their governments. There was an outrage about how the war was handled, as well as the way information was manipulated in order to hide the horrors of the war. During World War I and between the wars, revolutions occurred across Europe, including Russia, Ireland, Germany, and Hungary<sup>75</sup>. Many of the same anger was present in the United States, because American citizens dealt with the same problems.

World War I posters did not want to portray any image that would upset the viewer and make them wonder if the war was worth fighting. The First World War had to be sold to the American public, whereas World War II was thrust onto Americans with the attack at Pearl Harbor. The use of Romantic styles of art lent itself to the success of selling the war, because the images on the posters would not be upsetting. Instead, Romanticism always portrayed the soldiers as brave, military leaders as brilliant, and never contained a graphic death<sup>76</sup>. These images are mostly contrary to the truth of the war. When the soldiers came home, they were

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<sup>73</sup> George C. Marshall Research Foundation and Anthony R. Crawford. *Posters of World War I and World War II in the George C. Marshall Research Foundation*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), 9.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>75</sup> Beth Irwin Lewis, Paul Paret, and Peter Paret, *Persuasive Images: Posters of War and Revolution from the Hoover Institution Archives*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 100.

<sup>76</sup> *Posters of World War I and World War II*, 8.

upset over the false images of the war that was given to them. Many of the military leaders were inept and vain, and the amount of suffering and pain the soldiers endured, as a result of poor leadership, was maddening<sup>77</sup>. All of the anger and sadness that resulted from the war and the lies that the government perpetuated resulted in a general feeling of postwar disillusionment. A new cynicism became the norm and the old Romantic way died with the First World War. Realism was the result of the death of Romanticism, and Realism would become main art style of World War II.

The printing of photographed images became more common during the interwar years, and became a part of many World War II posters. Depicting the enemy changed little between wars. Enemy soldiers became more animal-like, while the leaders were often buffoons. Women's role in the workforce grew from war to war, so their portrayal changed too. Due to the growth of information technology from the beginning of the twentieth century to the middle, the idea of information leakage by average citizens became a much more important topic in World War II. As a whole, war posters did not change drastically between the world wars, however, there was still a change, which was mostly a result of the outcome of World War I.

A transformation that occurred between wars concerned the way artists composed the posters, which contributed to the change in art styles. New propaganda strategies and techniques developed because of the way people became desensitized to propaganda posters in World War I.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, the propaganda campaigns changed completely. The poster became less important in World War II due to the popularity and abundance of the radio and movies.<sup>79</sup> Posters became one smaller part of a much larger campaign. Another major change was the use of more sophisticated propaganda tactics, which was also due to World War I, as well as a better

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

understanding of psychology and a new consciousness to propaganda.<sup>80</sup> Many began to see all propaganda as evil, and noticed when posters were overtly propagandistic, due to the results of World War I. People saw how the posters depicted idealistic images but learned how the actual war was worse. Distrust grew among many Americans of all forms of propaganda. As a result, the government and advertising agencies had to become more clever when trying to influence the public. These new tactics and strategies caused most of the change between the composition styles of the posters in each world war.

The posters of the First World War contained images indicative of Romanticism, which evoked more emotion, due to the dramatic portrayals of events and people. Good examples are *Figures 8, 1, and 9*. *Figure 1* shows Columbia draped across Uncle Sam's lap, as though someone assaulted her, and both *Figure 8 and 9* depict the German invasion of Belgium. All of these posters are very dramatic, and not subtle in any way. People notice the overt nature of those kinds of poster. World War II posters also contained dramatic images, but many were a part of the reality of the war. The public understood and disliked the propaganda styles of the previous war, which helped to cause the change to Realism. *Figures 22 and 23* each depict events in a way that is dramatic but real. Both posters examine the brutality of the enemy. Each poster discusses an actual event from the war and presents it in a way that is ground in reality; whereas similar World War I posters, *Figure 8 and 1*, show the enemy as either an animal or a threatening silhouette.

Two other types of imagery were indicative of the Romanticism in the posters of the First World War. The posters contained very few images of corpses and the bayonet is present in most of the posters that depict soldiers. In the posters of the Second World War, there were very few images of bayonets, while corpses were more common. Bayonets are a good example of Romanticism, because by the time World War I starts bayonets are antiquated, due to the

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 9.



prolific amounts of machine gun fire and rifles that can hold multiple rounds in their magazine. This is a result of Realism being the common art style.

Examples of bayonets in World War I posters are present on *Figures 12, 7, and 6*, which all contain the image of soldiers. Whenever the artists wanted to depict a soldier, it was common to give him a gun with a bayonet attached. This was most likely because of when the war took place bayonets were a normal part of a soldier's armament, because some engagements turned into hand-to-hand combat. European countries were not ready for higher rates of fire from the guns used in the First World War, and were stuck with the idea of close combat, which was mostly seen when one army was able to reach the enemy trenches. The idea of the bayonet became antiquated and as useful as carrying a sword when dealing with machine gun fire. However, artists still used the imagery of the bayonet, because most people recognized it.<sup>81</sup>

*Figure 12*, which shows a German soldier with bloody hands and bayonet, seems to use the image of the bayonet as a means to convey the message of savagery, because the poster alludes to the German invasion of Belgium. The images on *Figures 6 and 7* are different, because American soldiers taking on the German empire with just their bayonets. The soldiers look heroic, which is still present in World War II posters, but the soldiers are seldom depicted using bayonets.

*Figures 23 and 24* are posters from the Second World War which contain bayonets but not used by American soldiers. In *Figure 24*, the American soldiers from 1778 watch their counterparts from 1943 march. Both groups are in formation, but the men from the Revolutionary War have bayonets on their guns, whereas the troops marching by do not. Having fixed bayonets on a soldier's weapon was mostly an image of the past, which this poster illustrates. *Figure 23* is different because it depicts Japanese soldiers with bayonets on their rifles. There are many reasons why the artists may have chosen to illustrate the enemy that way. One reason is that the Japanese were prone to launching Bonsai attacks with fixed bayonets and

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 10.

officers brandishing swords. Another explanation could be that the Japanese used antiquated tactics which would reinforce the idea of Japanese brutality and that they are vestiges of the past. The image of the bayonet seems to have taken on a new meaning between wars. By the time America entered the war with the newer and faster style of warfare, the idea of the bayonet changed from heroic and modern to more of an antiquated and brutal one.

One major addition to the poster compositions between the two world wars is the addition of corpses. They were rare in the posters from World War I, but in World War II artists increasingly depicted dead soldiers and civilians. *Figures 5* and *20* are good examples of the differences in styles.

*Figure 5*, which is from World War I, shows a soldier carrying another on his back and together they make up a red cross. The wounded soldier that is on the other's back is not necessarily dead. He is most likely alive, because the other soldier is presumably taking him to a Red Cross station. One of the hidden messages in this poster is that the Red Cross heals and brings hope to wounded soldiers. The heroism in this poster is a good example of the Romanticism style, which is very different than the Realism imagery on *Figure 20*. *Figure 20* portrays Japanese soldiers killing people and taking a naked woman by her ankle. In the details of this image, are two corpses of people who are hanging by their necks, and a Japanese soldier is stabbing a figure in the background. There are multiple corpses and people dying in this image, which is a part of the Realism of this poster. This type of composition is very different to what is on *Figure 5*. On *Figure 20* there is no hope in the imagery.

The depiction of the enemy changed between the two wars. During World War I, German soldiers looked somewhat realistic, whereas the leadership and the idea of Germany itself was shown as animalistic or demonic. That is evident in *Figures 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12*. There

was a shift during World War II to a more animalized depiction of the enemy soldiers, and their leaders became clown-like cartoon characters in *Figures 17, 18, 19, 20* and *21*.

During the First World War, Romantic artists mostly depicted the average German soldier as a regular looking person wearing a German uniform. *Figure 12* is a primary example of a German soldier on an American poster. The appearance of the soldier is of a normal human, although he is menacing, looming over a destroyed town with bloody hands and bayonet. That image is very different from a World War II counterpart like *Figures 19 and 20*, which both contain caricatures of Japanese soldiers. *Figure 19's* Japanese soldier looks less simian than the soldier in *Figure 20*, but the figure still has enlarged red lips and pointed teeth. Whereas, in *Figure 20* the soldier has very large eyes, as well as elongated arms and legs, and the soldier is standing like an ape. However, the depiction of the Japanese was very different than the portrayal of the Germans in World War II. *Figure 16* shows a German soldier looking at the viewer, and similar to World War I, is menacing but seems to have lost many of the human qualities that were in the posters of the First World War. In *Figure 16*, the soldier looks more like a machine, because the only human aspects about this caricature are the eyes and bridge of the nose. Everything else about the figure suggests he is not human, due to the entire figure being black with the whites of his eyes being the only color.

The caricature of the enemy leaders changed from animals and demons in World War I to buffoonish caricatures in World War II. *Figure 7* shows the Kaiser as a snake, while *Figures 10* and *11* both imagine him as a devilish creature, with red skin and long pointed ears. These three posters have two different types of depictions of the Kaiser, but promote him as being nonhuman. In World War II, the enemy leaders mostly looked comical with exaggerated features. *Figures 17* and *18* both depict Hitler as an oaf. On *Figure 17*, he is wearing his uniform without his pants but in underwear with swastikas. The idea behind the poster is that the American army is able to surprise Hitler's panzers, and he has a puzzled look on his face as he peers over his shoulder.

*Figure 18* is different, because it solely has Hitler's face on the front with exaggeratedly large eyes, ears, and lips. He looks more like a cartoon character than the enemy leader, and that is part of the meaning of the poster. These two posters show the enemy leader as more of a cartoon than person, which is very different than the posters from World War I.

The portrayal of women was another aspect of propaganda posters that changed from one war to the next. Women gained more empowerment in World War II, which was due to the labor shortage and the need for more women to enter the workforce. During World War I, posters like *Figure 15* cast women as suggestively filling the man's uniform and as tools for recruitment. This poster depicts a young attractive woman in a Navy uniform that is a little too big for her, and is trying to influence men into going to the Navy recruitment office. World War II posters were very different, because "Women did not lose their femininity, but were portrayed trimmer and more businesslike, usually at work in factory or shipyard or in the uniform of one of the new military branches for women."<sup>82</sup> *Figures 26, 27, and 28* are examples of posters showing women in their new roles. The woman on *Figure 26* is wearing a U.S. Nurse Corps uniform, and the artist of the poster shows her as stylish, attractive, and businesslike. There were many new ways for women to help the war effort at home and this is a recruitment poster for one of the new ways women could serve. *Figures 27 and 28* both depict women working in factory. Women were joining the workforce in increasing numbers since the beginning of the century, but due to the war, even more women needed to join the workforce and take jobs that men normally performed. Factory jobs were some of the most important, and *Figure 28* attempts to lure women into taking those jobs. Since the nation was in need for women to join the workforce in increasing numbers, the way posters depicted this also changed in order both to change the mind of women, as well as help men acclimate to the idea.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 11.

The posters in World War II saw two new additions to their compositions. Information leakage received some attention during World War I, but became a large part of the propaganda campaigns of the Second World War. Also, many posters began to have photos printed on them, which was very rare in World War I.

*Figure 29* is one of the most famous examples of what people started calling the “Careless Talk” campaigns. Every government feared enemy spies and sympathizers. In America, one of the main concerns was complacency, so reminding people to be careful about what they say and write was an important theme in the poster campaigns.<sup>83</sup> The imagery of these posters usually shows American lives being lost. *Figure 29* depicts an American ship sinking. Many of the other posters were very similar, although not all used those kinds of means of persuasion. *Figure 16* is an exception. The poster depicts a German soldier staring forward, with the phrase “HE’S WATCHING YOU”. This type of poster, while having the same message, means to intimidate people into being more careful about what they do and say.

Although the invention of photography occurred long before World War I, there were very few posters at that time that used printed photos; however, in World War II the number of photographs on posters increased dramatically. *Figures 25* and *28* contain photographs as the focal point of the poster. Both images are of individuals working in war factories, and the aim of these posters is to change the minds of the average person. In order to accomplish that goal, the OWI decided to use photos of real people working. This choice is indicative of the larger idea of Realism. The OWI wanted to show people the staged reality that best helped to accomplish their various goals, be it to change public perception of women or stop people from disclosing important information.

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<sup>83</sup> James Aulich, *War Posters: Weapons of Mass Communication*, (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 172.

World War II posters had some new additions through the promotion of stopping careless talk and using photos printed onto the posters. Spies and sympathizers were the focus of many propaganda campaigns, because the government seemed to prioritize careless talk more. Photos were in some World War I posters, but in the Second World War the use of photos increased substantially.

## CONCLUSION

Through the two world wars, propaganda posters contained similar themes and subject matter, but as the twentieth century progressed and society changed, the war posters changed in order to be effective. The Creel Committee and the OWI used some of the same themes as important for the war effort. Symbols, countermeans, and slogans were commonly employed in both wars. However, there were some differences between the posters in each war. The Second World War also saw an increased use in some methods and campaigns. Uses of the posters were mostly the same between the wars, due to the importance of conservation of resources, war bonds, and decreasing the dissemination of important information.

Artists during World War I composed their posters using a more Romanticism style, while in World War II Realism was the main artistic technique. World War I posters displayed Romanticism through their use of iconography that is indicative of that style, like heroic figures. However, the Realism in WWII made the posters contain graphic photographs that intended to shock the viewer and brought the war home.

The posters in both wars were successfully implemented, at least concerning to the triumph of the conservation and fund raising efforts. Those two metrics are easier to prove than stopping careless talk or hating the enemy. In the First World War, bond drives raised 21.5

billion dollars, which is the modern equivalent of 340 billion dollars, and most of the sales were to banks and financial groups<sup>84</sup>. Then in World War II, 85 million Americans purchased 185.7 billion dollars worth of bonds, which is the modern equivalent of 2.6 trillion dollars<sup>85</sup>. The bond drives in both wars raised enough money to significantly help the government pay for the war, thanks in part to posters.

Some posters, like *Figure 27*, became more famous after the war than when they originally saw use. *Figure 27*, for example, has become an iconic poster that symbolizes feminism and the modern women's movement, which is a stark contrast from where the poster started. The life of the posters goes beyond the war.

When looking at the posters, the viewer can glimpse into the culture of that time. These posters are a product of the society that created them, and lessons can come from examining the posters and discussing their place in history. The public can learn about our past through these works of art, because what previous generations endured is encapsulated within the posters. A change in society is present in the change of styles between the wars. In World War I people still saw war as heroic and civilized, whereas by World War II everyone saw the destruction of the First World War and knew the reality of war.

One of the purposes of this work is to aid the J.M. Davis museum in providing information that would be useful for them to use with some of their exhibits. Each section of this thesis can turn into an information cards by simplifying the language and condensing the content. The museum's current World War I exhibit focuses on the posters in their collection. Using information from this work can help the viewers fully understand where the posters fit into the

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<sup>84</sup> James J. Kimble, *Mobilizing the Home Front: War Bonds and Domestic Propaganda*, (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2006), 16.

<sup>85</sup> Terrence H. Witkowski, "World War II Poster Campaigns: Preaching Frugality to American Consumers," *Journal of Advertising* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2003):79, (accessed February 27, 2016)



war, American society, and historical context. The identification of various iconography gives the patron information that they can learn and apply to other works of art.

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APPENDIX

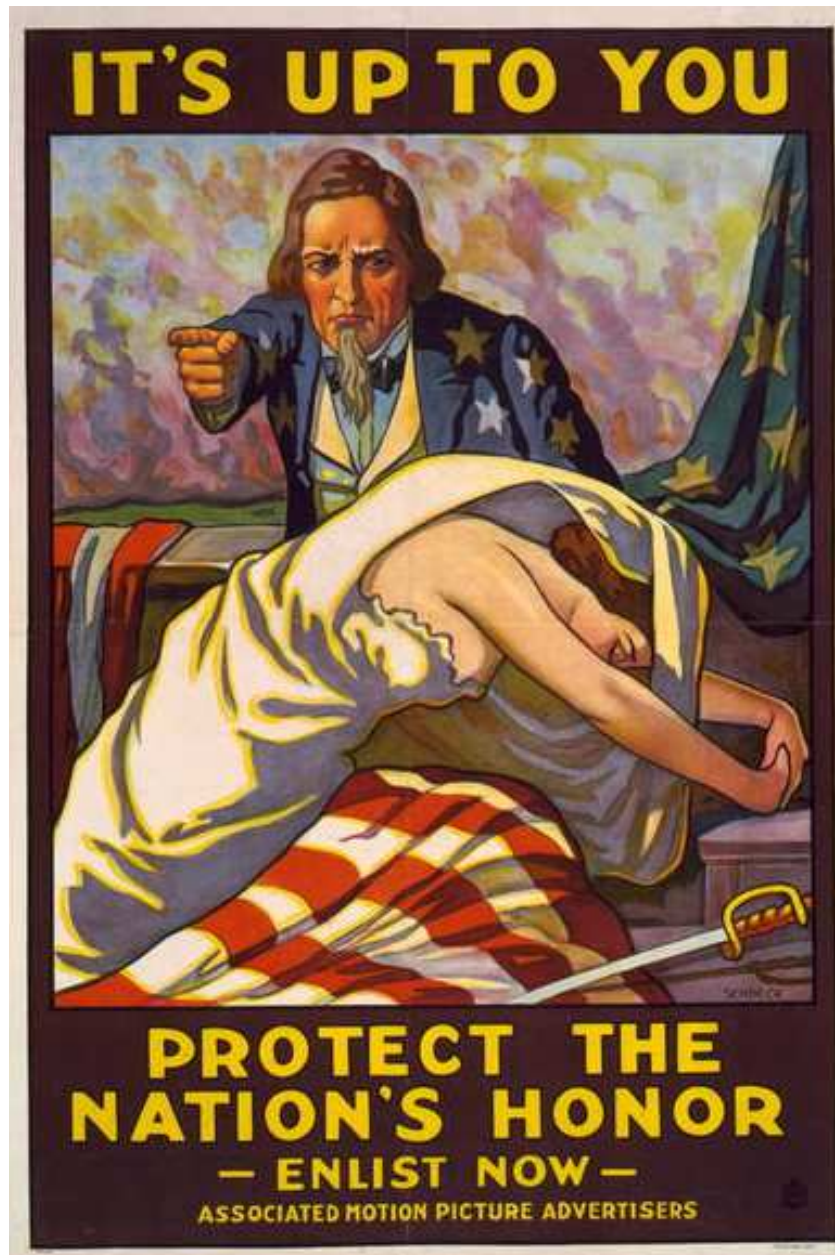


Figure 1. *It's Up to You-- Protect the Nation's Honor*. 1918. Library of Congress.  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/92506221/>

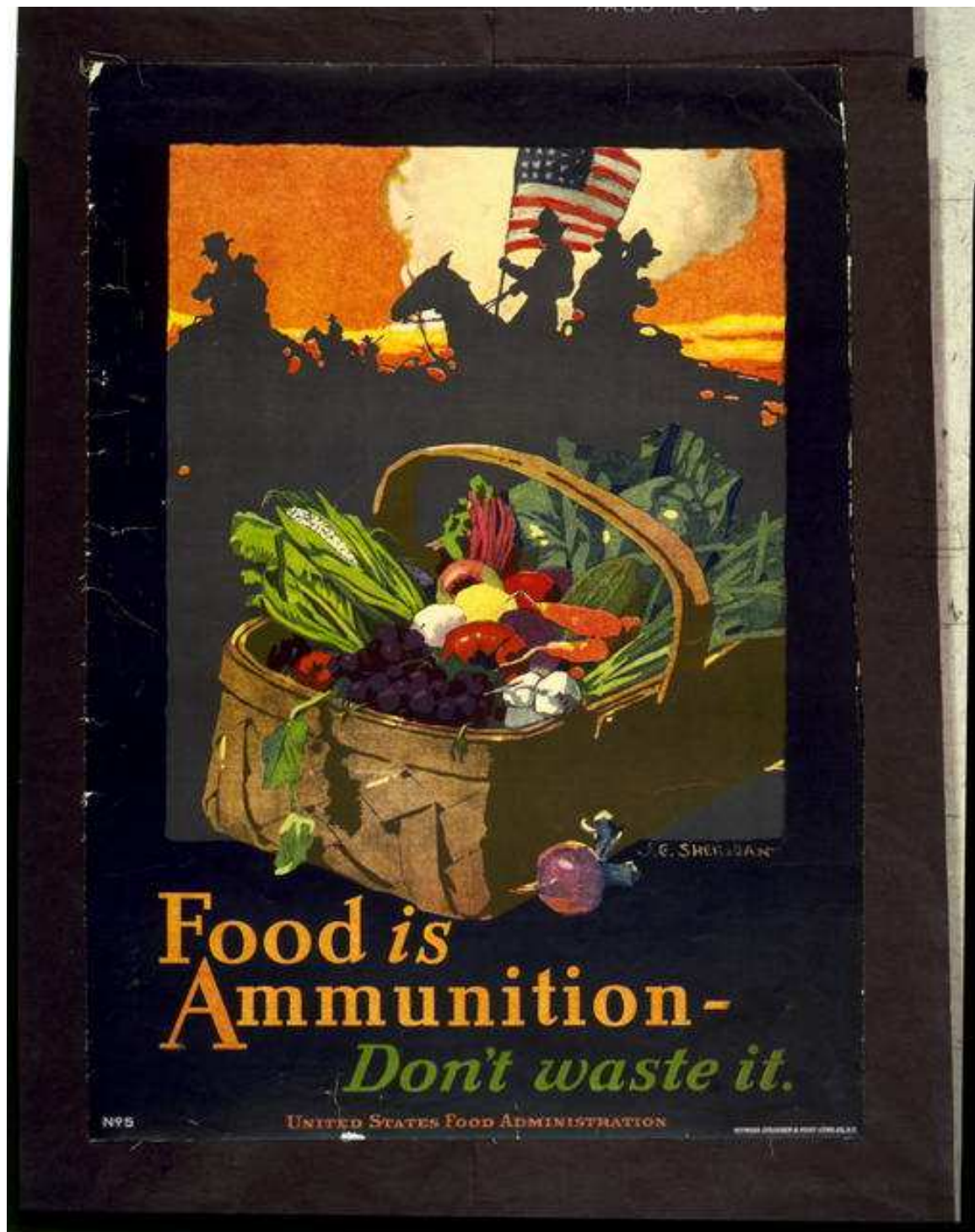


Figure 2. Sheridan, John E. *Food is Ammunition- Don't Waste it.* 1918. Library of Congress.  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/94514370/>



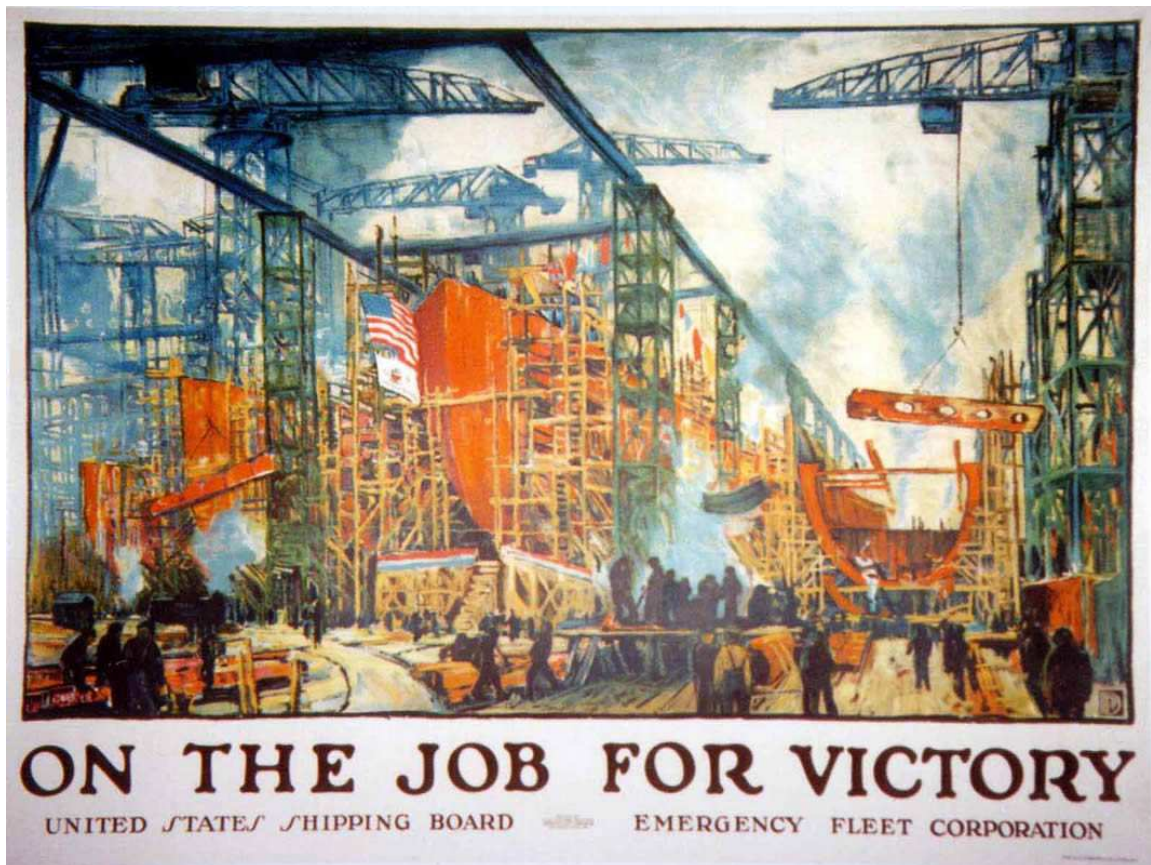


Figure 3. Lie, Jonas. *On the Job for Victory*. 1918. Library of Congress.  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002712071/>



Figure 4. Britton, L. N. *The Navy is Calling- Enlist Now*. 1917?. Library of Congress.  
<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/95501029/>





Figure 5. Barclay. *Second Red Cross War Fund*. 1917 or 1918. Temple University Libraries.  
<http://digital.library.temple.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p16002coll9/id/3510>



Figure 6. "We Closed the Road to Paris- We're on Our Way to Berlin". 1918. J.M. Davis Arms and Historical Museum

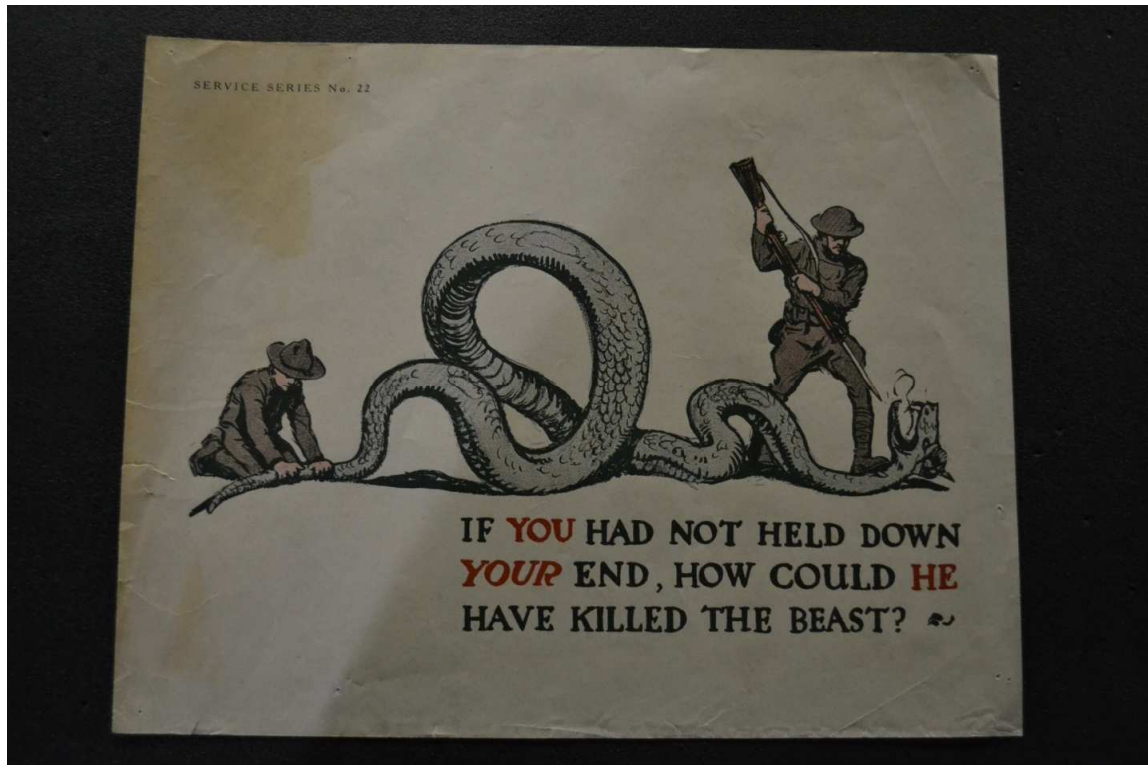


Figure 7. *If You Had Not Held Down Your End, How Could He Have Killed the Beast?*. J.M. Davis Arms and Historical Museum

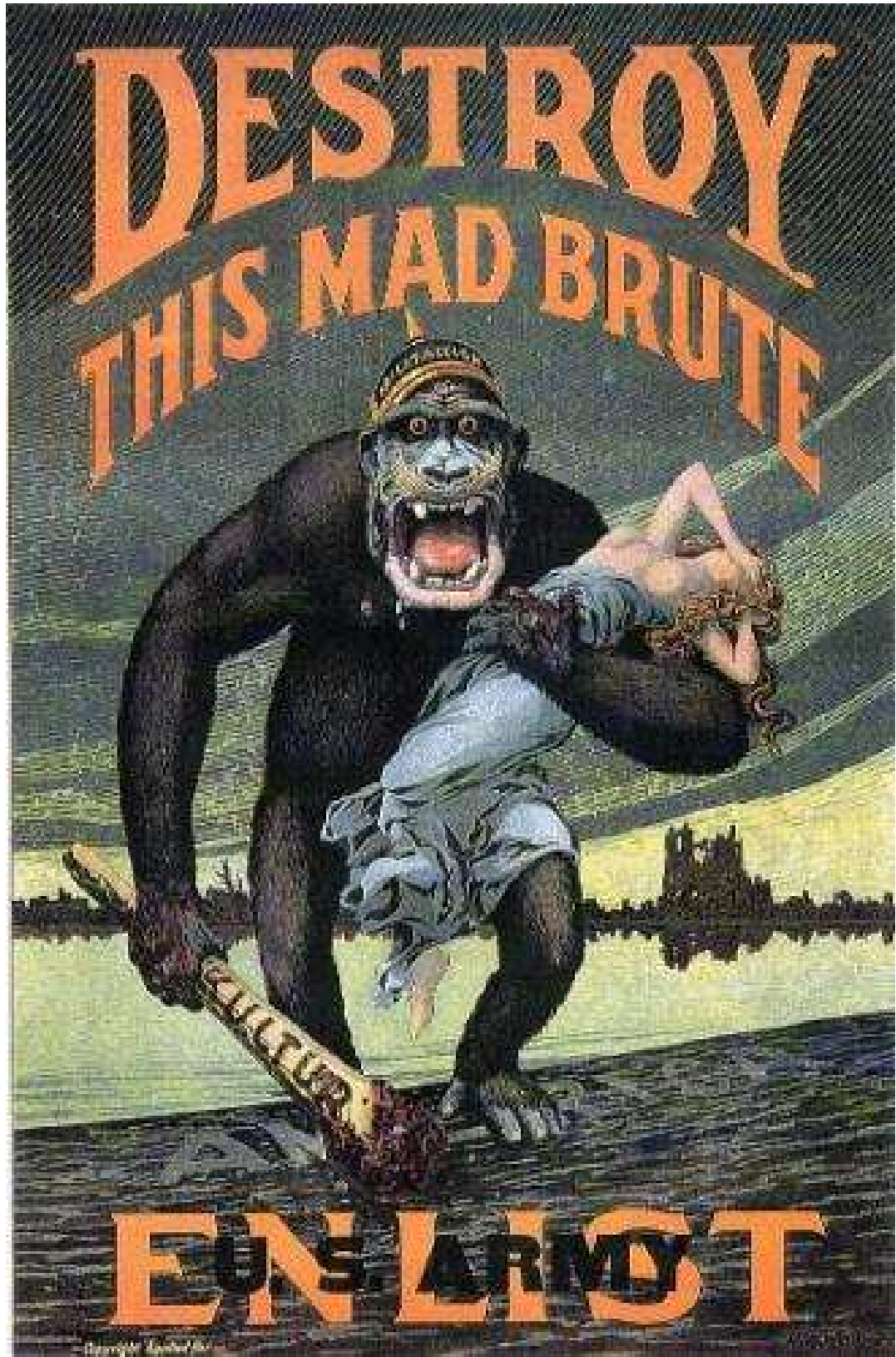


Figure 8. Hopps, Harry R. *Destroy This Mad Brute- Enlist*. 1917. Library of Congress.  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010652057/>



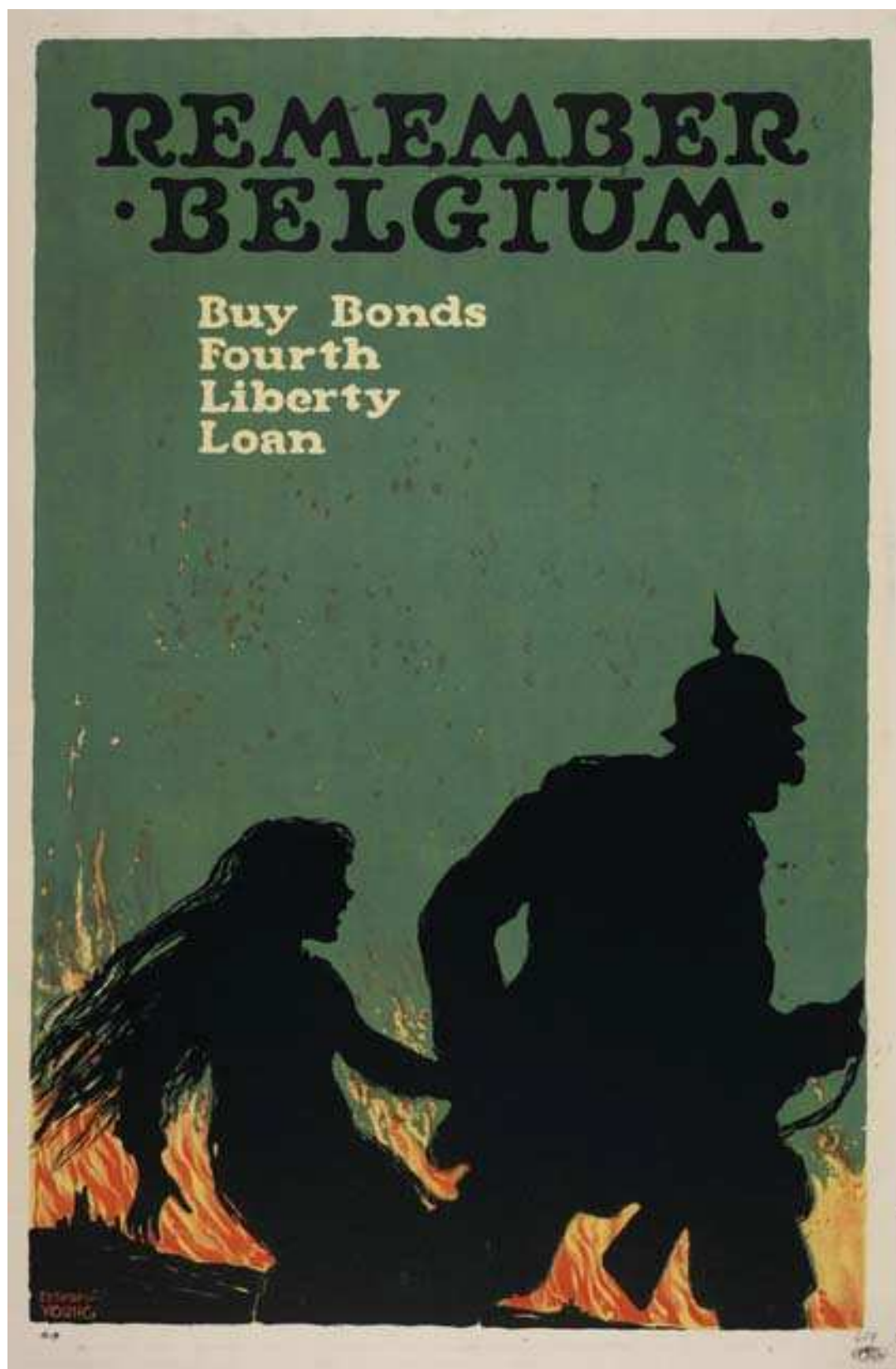


Figure 9. Young, Ellsworth. *Remember Belgium*. 1918. Library of Congress.  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96507603/>



Figure 10, Collier, Barron. *All Civilization Stands Against These Two*. 1918. J.M. Davis Arms and Historical Museum



Figure 11. Collier, Barron. *A Good Month's Business*. 1918. J.M. Davis Arms and Historical Museum



Figure 12, Strothmann, Fredrick. *Beat Back the Hun with Liberty Bonds*. 1918. Library of Congress. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/94505100/>





Figure 13, *Defeat the Kaiser and His U-Boats*. 1917. J.M. Davis Arms and Historical Museum



Figure 14. Hufaf, August William. *Treat 'Em Rough- Join the Tanks*. 1917. Library of Congress.  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002712001/>



Figure 15. Christy, Howard Chandler. *Gee!! I Wish I were a Man- I'd Join the Navy*. 1917. Library of Congress. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002712088/>

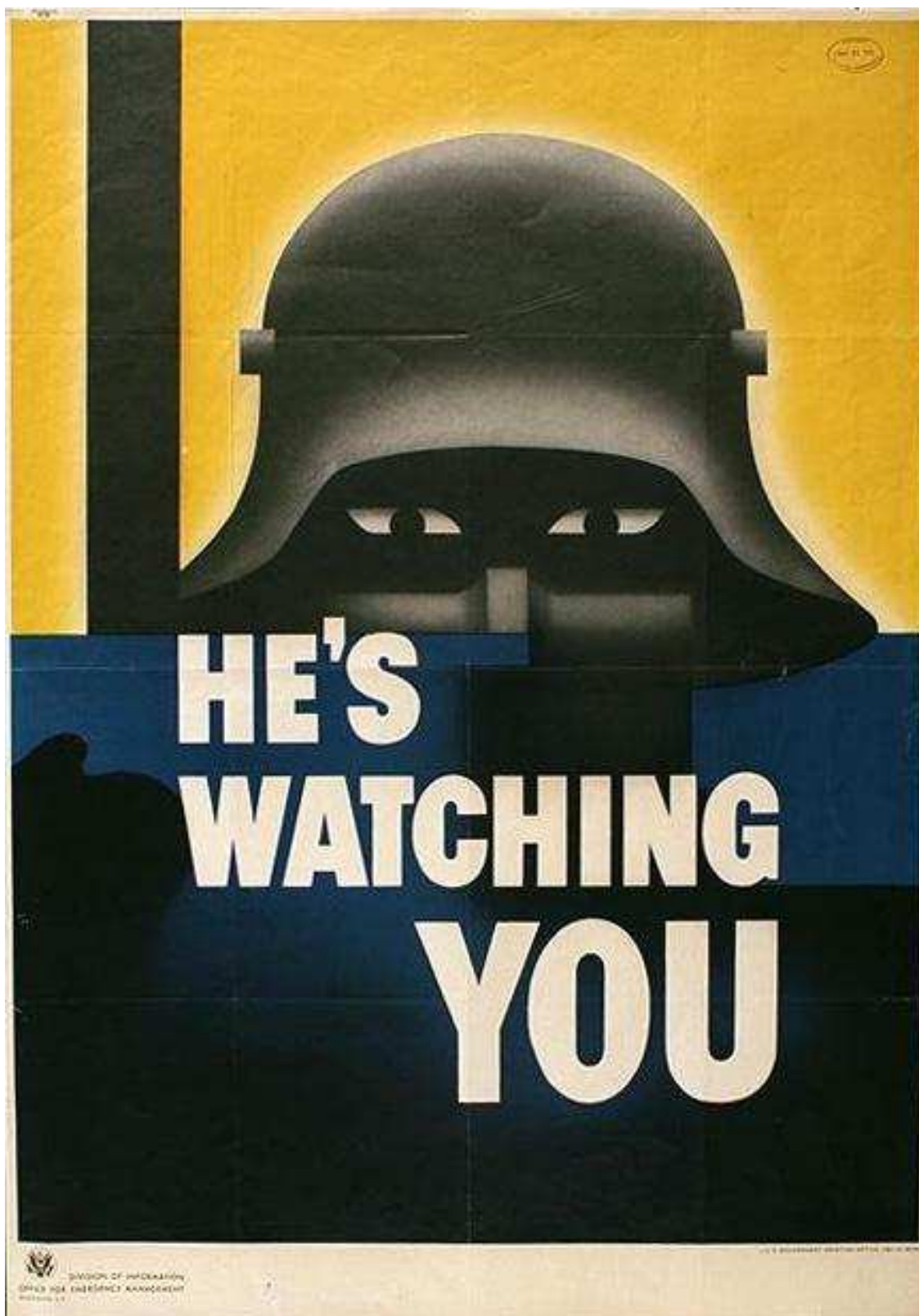
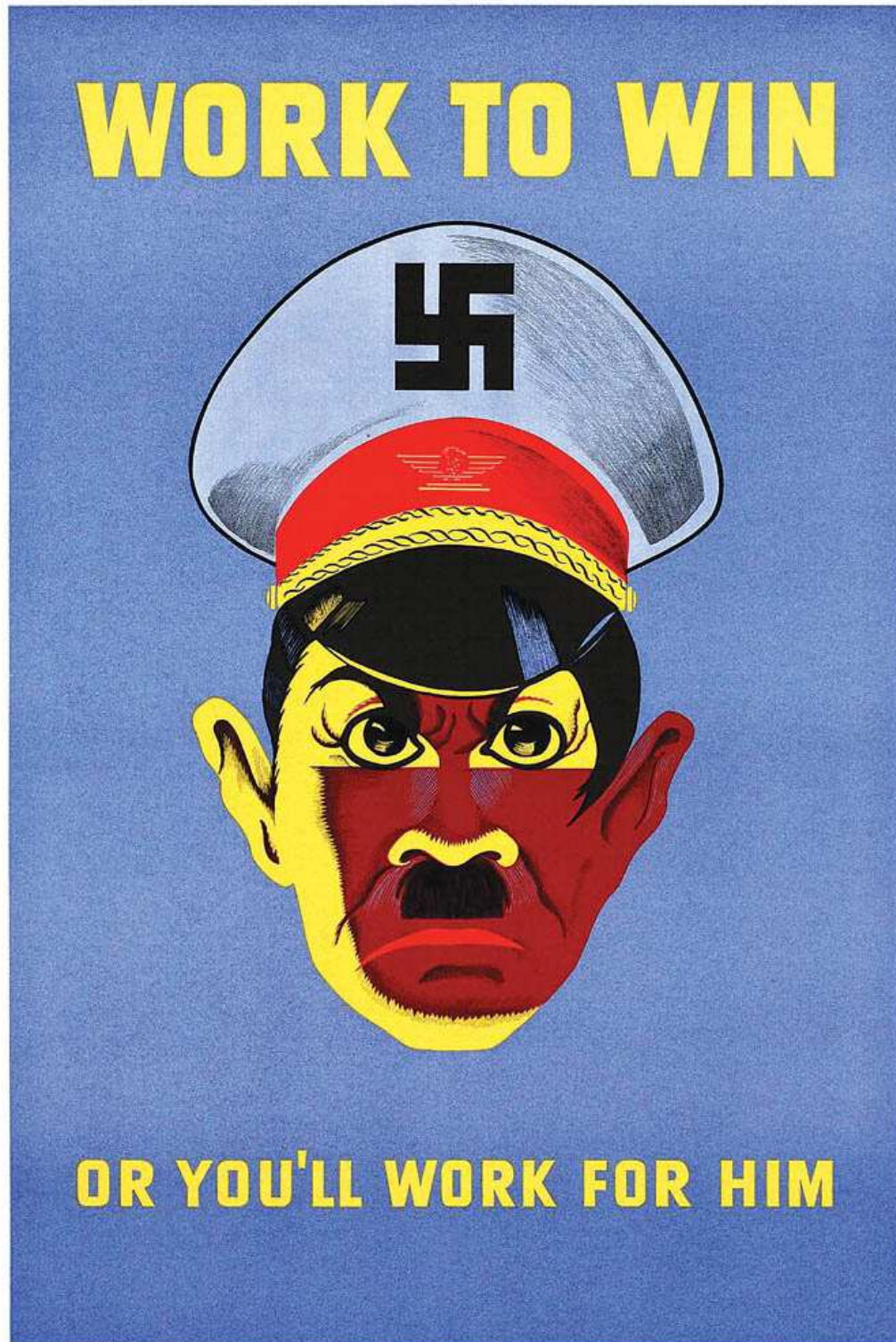


Figure 16. Grobe, Glen. *He's Watching You*. 1942. Library of Congress.  
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Produced for Joint Labor Management War Production Drive Committee by Rogers-Kellogg-Sullivan, Inc., New York.  
**Figure 18. *Work to Win- or You'll Work for Him.* University of California Online Archives.**  
<https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/28722/bk0007s8w5b/>



Figure 19. *Keep This Horror From Your Home*. National Archives Catalog.  
<https://research.archives.gov/id/534105>





Figure 20. *This is the Enemy*. 1942. Life Magazine. <http://www.gettyimages.com/license/53368255>



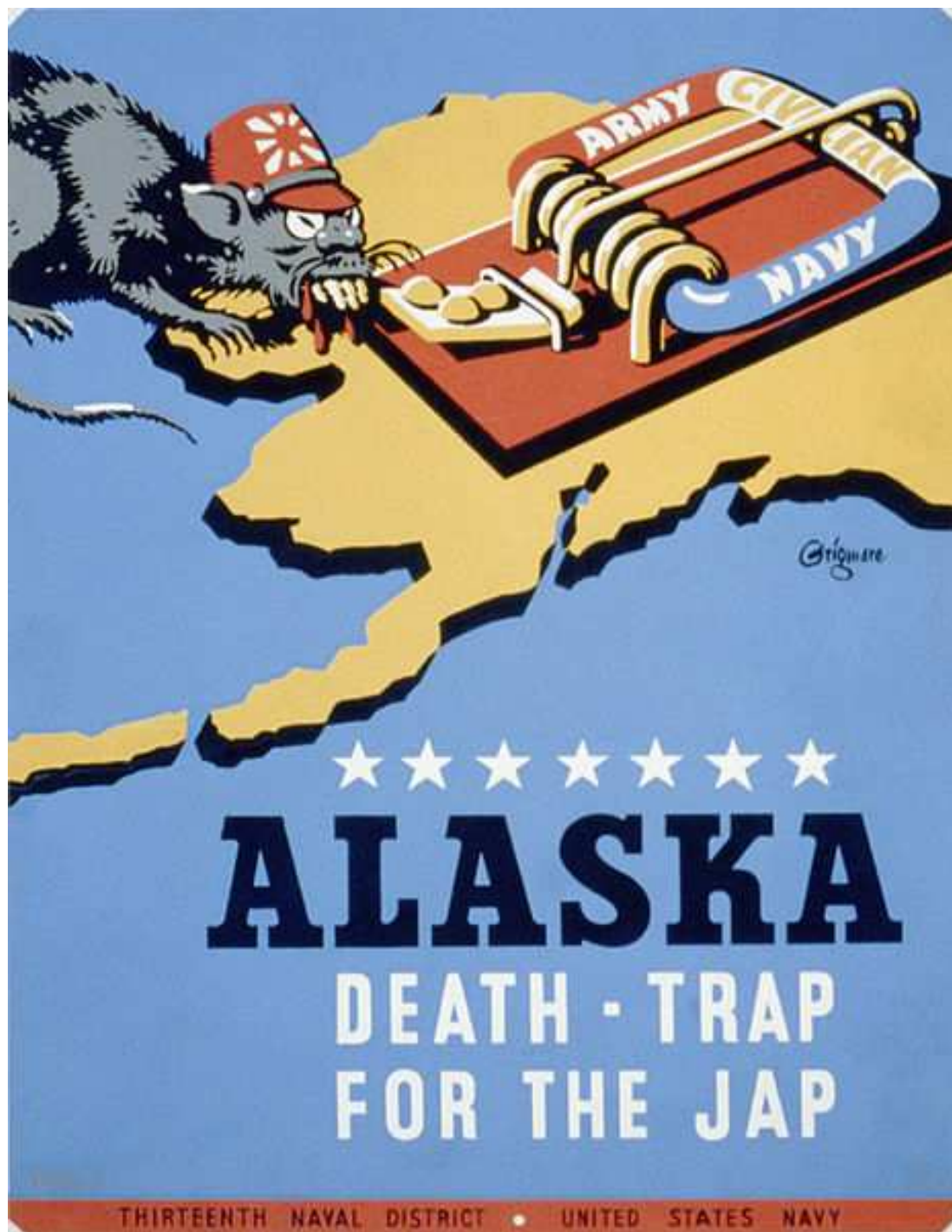


Figure 21. Grigware, Edward T. *Alaska- Death-Trap- For the Jap*. 1941. Library of Congress.  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/98510121/>

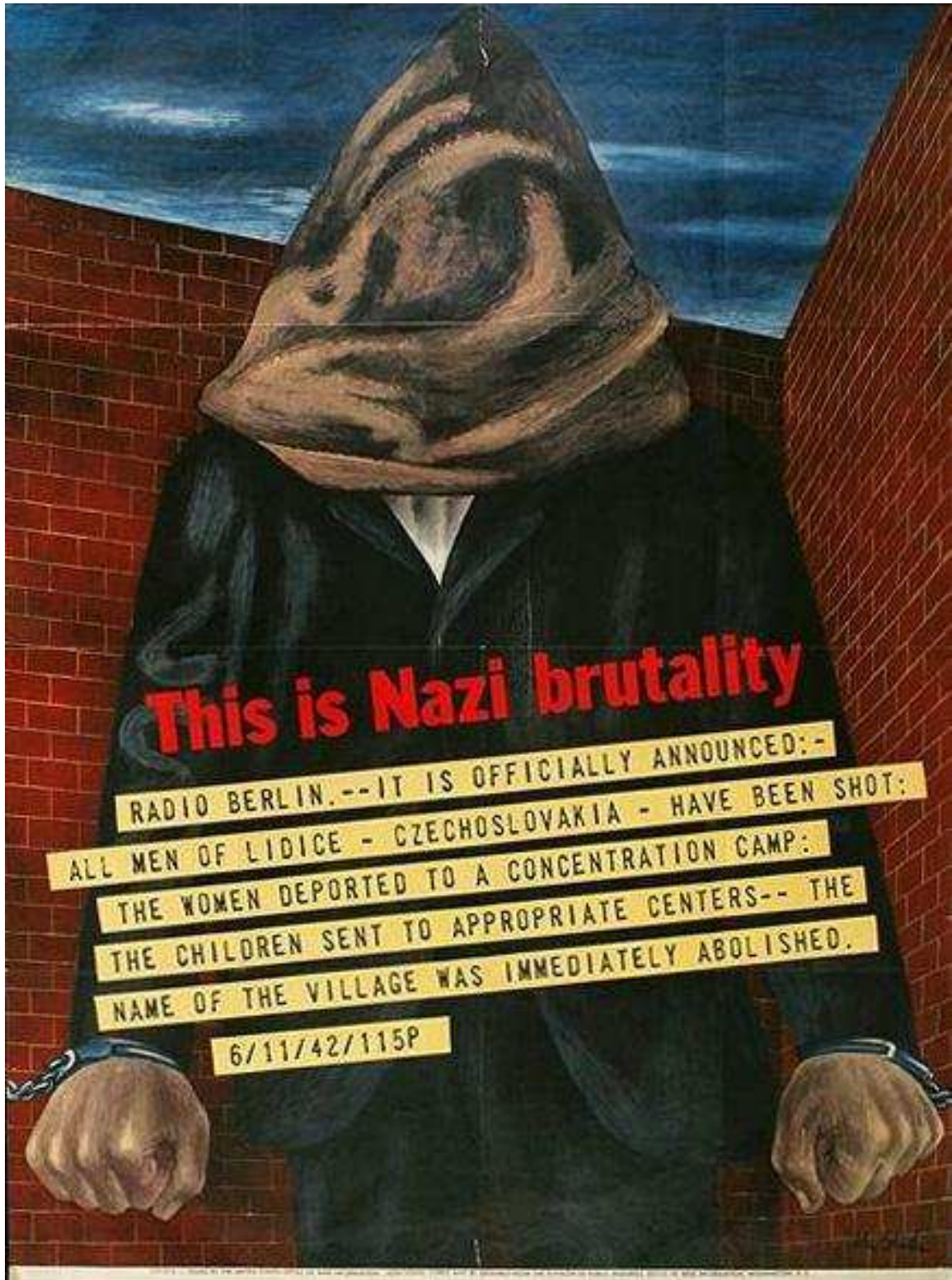


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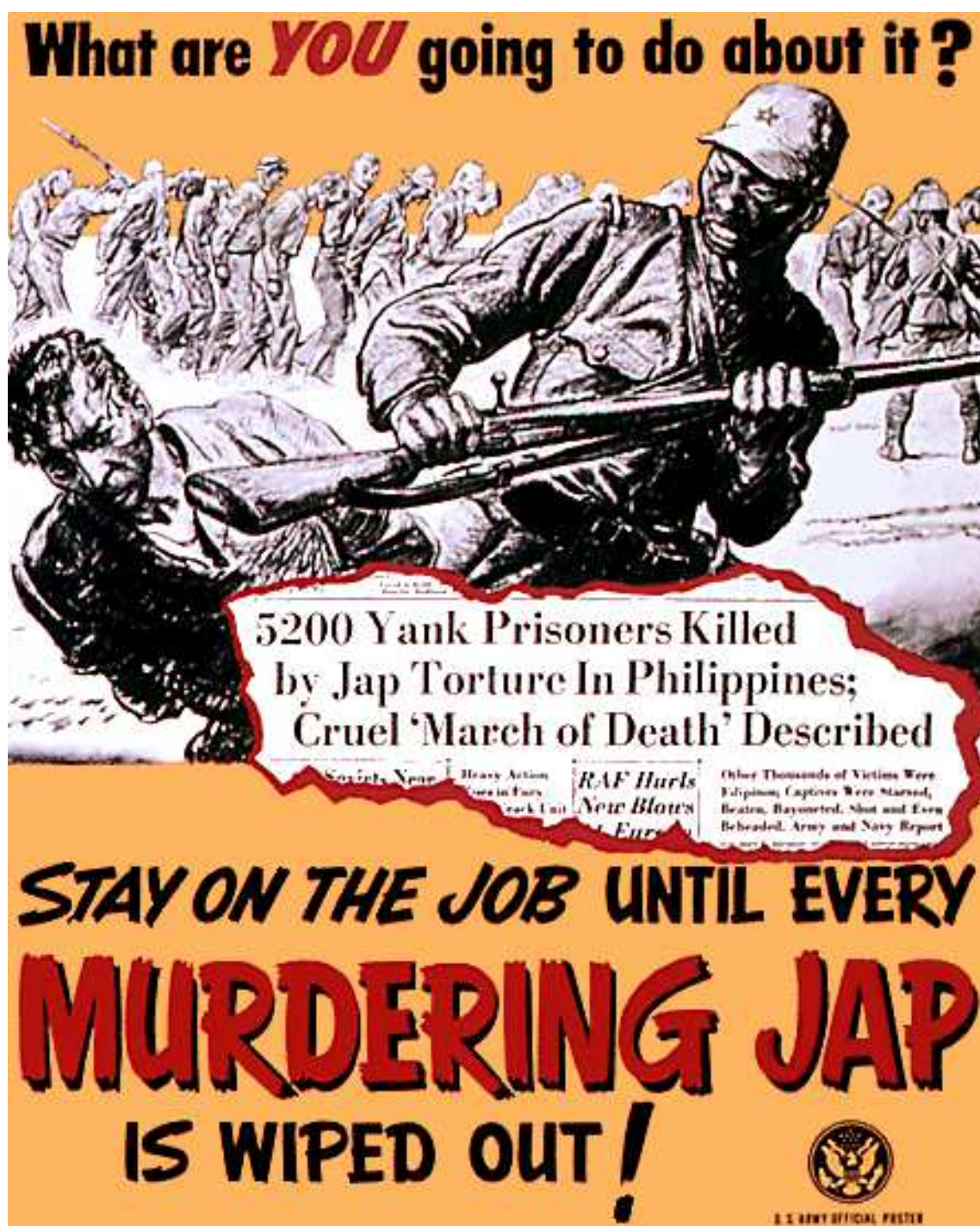


Figure 23. *What are You Going to do About It?*. 1944. Library of Congress.  
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Figure 24. Perlin, Bernard. *Americans-Will Always Fight for Liberty*. 1943. Northwestern University. <https://images.northwestern.edu/multiresimages/inu:dil-4e49c076-620e-49c8-bac4-f344b3aecf76>



Figure 25, Liberman, Alexander. *United We Win*. 1943. Library of Congress.

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Figure 26. Edmundson, Carolyn Moorhead. *Enlist in a Proud Profession!- Join the- U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps*. 1943. University of Northern Texas. <http://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc606/>



Figure 27. Miller, J. Howard. *We Can Do It!*. 1942. Library of Congress. <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/2733/>



Figure 28. *Women in the War- We Can't Win Without Them*. 1942. Library of Congress.  
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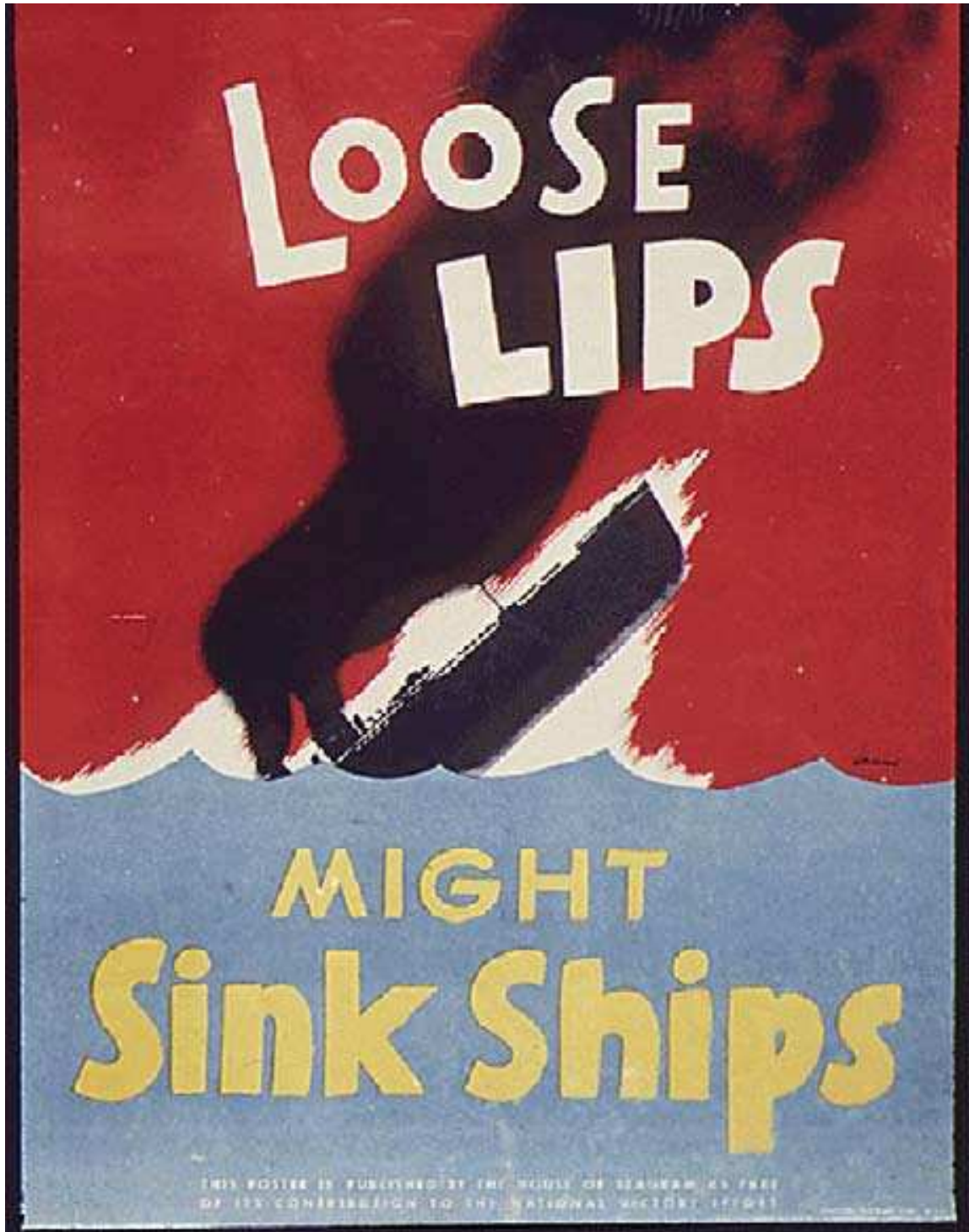


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Figure 30. Perlin, Bernard. *Avenge- December 7*. 1942. Library of Congress.  
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VITA

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